TEXTS FROM CHRISTIAN LATE ANTIQUITY

Volume 2

The Letters of

John of Dalyatha

The Letters of John of Dalyatha

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INTRODUCTION

John of Dalyatha or John Saba, the "Elder," is the author of these Letters. He was born in northwest Iraq and was a monk during the eighth century in a monastery at Qardu near the Turkish border. He was actually born in the village of Ardamut in Beit Nuhadra near the mountains of Kurdistan.[1] At the local church he first studied the basics of Christian life for those destined for the priesthood or monastic life: studies of Scripture, liturgy, and writings of the Fathers.[2] Already as a student he frequented the monastery of Mar Afnimaran. But eventually he entered a different one, further from his home, Mar Yuzadak, in the mountains of Qardu, east of the Tigris near Turkey. This is thought to be where Narsai, the prolific sixth-century writer of Scriptural verse and commentary had lived, and that John may have returned here for this reason.[3] His novicemaster was a certain "Blessed Stephen," a disciple of Mar Yuzadak (early 7th cent.). Hence one may set John in an historical context with a possible birth date of 690 and date of death about 780.[4] From Qardu, after living seven years in community, he received permission to establish himself as a solitary and went to the mountains of Dalyatha (lit. "of the vine branches") at 3,000 meters. He lived most of his life there. These mountains must have been a tremendous influence on his insights, though in the Letters he mentions them only once.[5] Perhaps these mountains helped him to reach and speak of such a unity with God while never arriving at monism or denying the

[1] Details may be found in J. Chabot, "'Le Livre de la chasteté' of Isho'denah," *Mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire* 16 (1896) # 126.

[2] J. M. Fiey, "La Bible dans la Vie de l'Église Syrienne Orientale Ancienne," *Bible et Vie Chrétienne* 67–72 (1966): 35–42.

[3] J. M. Fiey, *Assyrie Chrétienne*, 3 vols. (Beyrouth, 1965) vol. 2, 685–86.

[4] See R. Beulay, "Précisions touchant l'identité et la biographie de Jean Saba de Dalyatha," *PdO* 8 (1977/8): 103–16. See also Brian E. Colless, "The Biographies of John Saba," *PdO* 3 (1972): 45–63.

[5] Mountains, see Letter 37.2.

otherness of Christ.[6] He remained most of his life in the mountains, only returning to Qardu as a very old man when conditions had gone beyond his strength. At his return to Qardu other monks grouped around him and founded a community of which John was the superior until he died.

There has always been some confusion as to the authorship of the writings attributed to John of Dalyatha. Early manuscripts simply say "the Elder" or "divine Elder" although some references to Mar John the Elder do occur.[7] Not until the fifteenth century were two identities put forth, that of John of Dalyatha and John bar Penkaye. Others have reflected and written at length on this, and the present conclusion indicates that the author of the writings was in fact John of Dalyatha.[8]

In addition to the Letters he also wrote Discourses[9] and Chapters on Knowledge. The Letters are more personal in style than the Discourses since in the Letters he speaks of his own experiences. Sometimes he does this in the third person as a discrete way of dealing with their incredible and ineffable content. He truly speaks about God in a way in which few have ever heard him spoken of. John's is not an esoteric language, though some passages defy interpretation, but it is a language which pushes the limits of faith beyond where most are accustomed to go.

LOVE OF TRADITION

The Syriac mystics[10] of the seventh century such as Sahdona, Isaac of Nineveh, Dadisho, Shemʿon the Graceful, and in the eighth century John of Dalyatha and Joseph Hazzaya all had a love of tradition and of the Fathers that made up that tradition. The early patristic writers, whether Greek or Syriac, tended to be conservative in wishing to do their theologizing within

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[6] See, for example, Letter 7. According to Blum, the non-duality of Stephen bar Sudaili may have influenced John's monistic tendencies. See G. G. Blum, *Mysticism in the Syriac Tradition*, Correspondence Course 7 (Kottayam: St. Ephrem Ecumenical Research Institute, 1990), 24–25.

[7] See Beulay, "Précisions," 87–102.

[8] Colless says that they may have been the same person. See Colless, "Biographies," 61–63. Beulay presents evidence and draws a different conclusion. See "Précisions," 98.

[9] Beulay's critical edition of the Discourses with French translation will be published soon.

[10] Mystics here refers to those who wrote about the experience of God in a systematic way. The style of this writing is different from that of Ephrem or Jacob of Serug, for example, although the content—the mysteries of the sacramental life—is the same.

tradition which was for them a principle of hermeneutics and a methodology.[11] Scripture and spiritual writings could only be understood in the context of the Church's living tradition. Some Syriac authors are more specific in citing the Fathers, while others like John tend not to name names. Sometimes the lack of names is a result of later editing to remove certain Fathers considered less than orthodox for various reasons at various times. The influences easiest to track in the present translation are those of Gregory of Nyssa (d. 394); Evagrius (d. 399); Macarian Homilies (4th cent.); Theodore of Mopsuestia (ca. 350–428); Book of Steps (late 4th cent.); John the Solitary (5th cent.); Pseudo-Dionysius (5th/6th cent.).[12] Other mystical writers of the seventh and eighth centuries mention Babai (d. 628); Diodore of Tarsus (d. ca. 394); Theodoret of Cyr (ca. 393–460).[13]

As to what kind of influence the Fathers had on the seventh and eighth century mystics, and in particular on John, a very good analysis is provided by Beulay.[14] Not only does he trace lineage diachronically but he also does cross-textual studies showing how, for example, Evagrius might have influenced Isaac of Nineveh in a different way than he influenced John of Dalyatha. Included in the study is how the seventh century influenced the eighth century, such as Joseph Hazzaya's tremendous esteem for Isaac of Nineveh, referring to him as a "holy Father." Sebastian Brock's work on Isaac is very helpful as it includes so many references to East Syrian writers who influenced Isaac (and therefore John) or were influenced by him, or who simply demonstrate similar patterns of interpretation.[15]

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[11] See G. Florovsky, "The Function of Tradition in the Ancient Church," *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 9,2 (1963–64): 181–200. This conservative aspect is also underlined by Amann, see E. Amann, "La Théologie de l'église Nestorienne," *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique* 11, pt. 1 (1931) 288–92.

[12] See Beulay, LM. In the first part of the book, pages 16–181, Beulay considers the influences in detail of Gregory of Nyssa, Evagrius, the Macarian writings, John the Solitary, and Pseudo-Dionysius.

[13] See Beulay, LM, 184–223, where he looks at the dogmatic theological influence exerted by Theodore of Mopsuestia, Diodore of Tarsus, Theodoret of Cyr, and Babai.

[14] In the final section of LM, Beulay examines eleven authors in greater detail: (7th cent.) Sahdona, Dadisho of Qatar, Shem'on the Graceful, Isaac of Nineveh, Henanisho', John Bar Penkaye; (8th cent.) Abraham Bar Dashandad, John of Dalyatha, Joseph Hazzaya, Nestorius of Nouhadra, Berikhisho.

[15] See *Isaac of Nineveh (Isaac the Syrian) 'the Second Part,' Chapters IV–XLI*, ed./trans. Sebastian P. Brock (CSCO Syr. 224–25, 1995).

There is also an article by Brian Colless which looks in detail at many of the Fathers who influenced John.[16]

Finally, "Fathers" refers to the members of the monastic family who lived with these mystics and would have passed on the tradition of their lives to them: this is in fact the monastic way of learning.[17]

WAY OF WONDER

"Wonder" (*tehrâ*, *témhâ*) occurs very often in these Letters as noted throughout the translation. At the root of wonder in the Syriac fathers, at least as far back as St. Ephrem, is the understanding that a symbol contains what it symbolizes, at least in part, as opposed to allegory which only describes it. By allegory here is understood an image which explains and illustrates abstract ideas in a conceptual way.[18] The writings of John reveal a great sensitivity to the richness of the symbol which guards against abstraction without sacrificing intelligence. Whether it is nature which surrounds him or the situations in which he finds himself, John immediately connects these realities with the life of God. Because of the kind of writing he does, spiritual rather than exegetical, typology as evidenced in Ephrem is little found in the Letters, though scriptural references are certainly not lacking. But the nature and sacramental symbols are very common, continuing these aspects of Ephrem's world view. Similarly in John, this symbolic approach results in a sacramental view of the world leading to a sense of wonder and praise which renders all things holy.

In the Letters, several words are found for symbol: *râzâ* (mystery), *dumyâ* (resemblance), *dmûtâ* (form), *pélâtâ* (parable), *rémzâ* (sign),[19] *salmâ* (image). The most frequently used is *râzâ* which is another term for

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[16] Brian Colless, "The Mysticism of John Saba," *OCP* 39 (1973): 83–102.

[17] Beulay lists many quotations which John says he has heard from the Fathers. See LM, 225–28.

[18] This distinction between symbol and allegory is made by Beulay. See Beulay, ES, 27. Neither Antiochian nor Alexandrian forms of allegory are at issue here although both are apparent in East Syrian writings: Antiochian from Diodore of Tarsus and Alexandrian through the writings of Philoxenus of Mabboug (d. 523) and others who knew Greek works in translation. Rather it is a rejection of a type of allegorizing which Ricoeur also considers to be an abuse of symbolism. See P. Ricoeur, "The Hermeneutics of Symbols and Philosophical Reflection," *International Philosophical Quarterly* 2 (1962–63): 191–218.

[19] For an excellent analysis of *rémzâ* see Khalil Alwan, "Le 'Remzo' selon la Pensée de Jacques de Serug," *PdO* 15 (1998–99): 91–106. Alwan also notes links with Narsai concerning *rémzâ*.

sacrament in the Syriac tradition. Both Scripture and creation are full of these symbols.[20] But they can never be grasped by discursive reasoning. A rational, purely intellectual approach will never open up what is not only described but also contained within the symbol. Since the time of Ephrem there has been within the Syriac tradition a rejection of discursive reasoning and of those like Arius who try to investigate the nature of God. The ways of these *bâsôyê* (inquirers, pryers) are rejected also by John. He says to flee from them and instead to carry the remembrance of God in one's heart (Letter 50.18) and to search for the vision of God's glory in the mirror of the soul (Letter 50.19).

One symbol in John spans all salvation history: the garment of glory/light. It is the "garment of light which our will has stripped from us" (Letter 4.6), from when before the Fall God had clothed us in light. Disobedience brings the loss of the garment of light and a need for the clothing of the "garments of skin" (Gen. 3:21). At the Incarnation, providence offers a way back to glory/light as Christ becomes incarnate in "the garment which He borrowed from us for his covering" (Letter 37.2). From the moment of Christ's immersion in the Jordan river, the garment of light is available again in baptism, awaiting its fullness at the end of time. In anticipation of the eschaton, the garment of light becomes a wedding garment and Christ becomes the bridal chamber: "He is himself their wedding feast and their joyful bridal chamber" (Letter 7.2). This symbol includes the Eucharistic wedding feast as well as the eschatological banquet.[21]

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[20] All the mysteries, *râzê*, throughout Scripture are gathered in Christ and once incarnated in him become present and active in all humanity through the sacraments. This is a major theme in Ephrem's teaching. See, for example, his Hymns on Virginity 28.2: "The scattered mysteries (*râzê*) from the Torah, you have gathered beside your beauty; the figures which are in your Gospel you have put forth. And forces and signs from nature, you have mixed <like> pigments for your image (*surtâ*)." See *Des Heiligen Ephraem des Syrers, Hymnen de Virginitate*, ed. Edmund Beck (CSCO Syr. 94, 1962). For comments on the symbolic content of the Hymns on Virginity, see *Ephrem the Syrian, Hymns*, trans. Kathleen McVey (CWS, 1989), 39–47. See also Seely Beggiani, "The Typological Approach of Syriac Sacramental Theology," *TS* 64 (2003): 543–57. Dalmais shows the similarities between Ephrem and Theodore of Mopsuestia concerning *râzâ* as well as links with Narsai's use of the concept. See I. H. Dalmais, OP. "'Raza' et sacrement," in *Rituels: Mélanges offerts au Père Gy*, ed. P. de Clerck and E. Palazzo (Paris, 1990), 177–84.18.

[21] See S. P. Brock, "The Robe of Glory: a biblical image in the Syriac tradition," *The Way* 39.3 (1999): 247–59. See also idem, *The Luminous Eye* (CS 101, 1992), 85–97.

For John, fire with its power is hidden in all the natures of the universe, as an image of the almighty power of God, totally in every place while not being limited by any place (Letter 25.2). In a text quoted by Beulay from the unpublished Chapters of Knowledge of John, one sees the unmistakable influence of the Macarian writings in this fire imagery.[22] And in Letter 51.9–10, John applies the properties of fire in a way similar to the description of the symbol of fire in Pseudo-Dionysius (Celestial Hierarchy, ch. 15).

At the Incarnation, bodies become instruments of knowing. For Ephrem "the incarnation is not only an action of redemption, it is also an action of revelation."[23] What nature and Scripture could not reveal, Christ brings in his body and in this encounter through bodily senses God's revelation is received. John is attentive to this symbolic dimension of the senses, especially to that of smell.[24] The "Fragrance of Life" which the solitary inhales reveals to him the Father (Letter 45.3). Through the power of the Spirit the soul breathes the sweet fragrance of its Beloved (Letter 31.4) and inhales this Fragrance of Life through the Living One. Finally, in Letter 49 there is the contrast between the vivifying smell of grace with the corrupting smell of error.

Mirror imagery is prominent throughout the Syriac tradition. Certainly Ephrem used it to explore spiritual perception.[25] In the later East Syrian writers such as John, Beulay thinks the root of the image to be in Gregory of Nyssa and to some degree in Evagrius. For John, God can only be seen in the mirror of the soul or of the person (see Letters 7.3; 14.2; 15.1; 28.2; 45.3; 50.19; 51.13). And although some of his texts seem to indicate that there may be a more direct vision without benefit of the mirror, these would be moments of divine light, and rather than a disappearing of the mirror, they are moments of an overabundance of light.

To participate fully in the inquiry concerning matters of faith, an attitude of wonder is required. But the contrary is also true—that faith leads to wonder. As Philoxenus says: "Understanding investigates natural things with speech but in silence, faith lays hold of those things which are above

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[22] See Beulay, LM, 64–69.

[23] Susan A. Harvey, "Embodiment in Time and Eternity: a Syriac Perspective," *SVTQ* 43 (1999): 120–30.

[24] See Susan A. Harvey, "Saint Ephrem on the Scent of Salvation," *JTS* n.s., 49 (1998): 109–28.

[25] Brock, *Luminous Eye*, 74–77. Three aspects of Ephrem's mirror imagery are considered: the mirror of the self; prayer as mirror; the mirror of Scripture.

nature."[26] There are many similarities between how the life of faith is described and the structure of the symbolic thought of the Syriac fathers; perhaps the two are interrelated in a way insufficiently understood. Perhaps further study of Philoxenus' chapters on faith[27] will lead the way, as well as study of Isaac of Nineveh who writes extensively on the life of faith as "insight without sight." The question of symbolic content in John has different parameters than its discussion in Ephrem,[28] but, as Beulay indicates, it is an area not to be ignored.[29] And a better understanding of John's use of symbol could go a long way in helping to decipher some of his more difficult passages.

PATH OF GLORY

If John's way of interpreting Christian life is symbolic and sometimes difficult to understand, the goal of the life which he offers is very clear and present in almost every Letter: the Glory of God and his Beauty. Reading through the Letters and the Discourses, one is struck by the quantity of references to the Glory of God, human participation in this Glory, and the manifestation of the Glory throughout Creation. However, when one looks to find other examples of the use of Glory in authors previous to John or subsequent writers, the results are meager. Beulay has checked other East Syrian Fathers for similar occurrences of the term Glory and finds its use in Isaac twice, Sheʿmun the Graceful once, Dadisho of Qatar twice, Joseph

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[26] See *Philoxeni Mabbugensis: Tractatus tres de Trinitate et Incarnatione*, ed. A. Vaschalde (CSCO Syr. 9, 1961), 105. Paraphrasing Ephremic exegesis Robert Murray similarly concludes: "As light is the condition for vision, so the condition for a proper recognition of symbolic discourse and of its force, as of the symbolic potentiality of the whole created world, is faith." R. Murray, "The Theory of Symbolism in St. Ephrem's Theology," *PdO* 6/7 (1975/76): 1–20, esp. 6. And Ricoeur reminds "You must understand in order to believe, but you must believe in order to understand." See Ricoeur, "Hermeneutics," 202. See also Sidney Griffith, "'Faith Seeking Understanding' in the Thought of St. Ephrem the Syrian," in *'Faith Seeking Understanding': Learning and the Catholic Tradition*, ed. G. C. Berthold (Manchester, NH: St. Anselm College Press, 1991), 35–55.

[27] See especially Homilies 2 and 3 in *Philoxène de Mabboug, Homélies*, tr. E. Lemoine (SC 44, 1956).

[28] See T. Bou Mansour, "Étude de la terminologie Symbolique chez Saint Ephrem," *PdO* 14 (1987): 221–62.

[29] See Beulay, ES, 19; 268–72. He also refers to M. Eliade's *Patterns in Comparative Religion* in his explanation.

Hazzaya four times.[30] So one may wonder where this emphasis on Glory comes from? In one of his Discourses, John describes the state of the soul which has seen the face of its Lord as "what the Fathers call rapture (*htîpûtâ*) to see the Glory of God."[31] Here he refers once again to the Fathers of the tradition.[32] In this same Discourse, John also says that there is progression in the rapture that it is dynamic. This dynamic quality, according to Beulay, would exclude Evagrius as a possible influence, because for Evagrius the vision of Glory is static and not dynamic.[33] This leads Beulay to consider Gregory of Nyssa as the patristic source of John's vision of Glory.[34]

Beulay also considers Babai to be an important influence on East Syrian mysticism in general,[35] passing on his scriptural and patristic precisions concerning the vision of God, particularly in his commentary on the Centuries of Evagrius. And although he demonstrates differences from Babai's thinking, John maintains the same distinction between Glory and Nature, as he says in Letter 50: "For his Nature is a glorious, many-splendored light. He manifests the light of his Nature to those who love Him in all the worlds—that is, his Glory, not his Nature." It is as if the Nature of God is light and his Glory is a flashing of this light: the flashing ever increases, but one never arrives at the light. John is consistent in his conviction of this distinction, unusually so since, unlike Joseph of Hazzaya, he is not given to speculation.

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[30] See R. Beulay "Des Centuries de Joseph Hazzaya retrouvées?," *PdO* 3 (1972): 5–44, esp. 30–33.

[31] See Discourse 6, "On the visitations bestowed on solitaries," Vat. 125, 172a, as found in Beulay, "Centuries," 33. Unless otherwise noted, all other references to and selections from the Discourses of John of Dalyatha, in this Introduction and in the Notes, are based on: Brian E. Colless, *The Mysticism of John Saba*, Syriac text and English translation of the Discourses, reprint of Ph.D. thesis submitted in 1969 to the University of Melbourne. However, the numbering used by Fr. Beulay is followed here, see Beulay, ES, 23–25.

[32] John unfortunately does not specify which Fathers informed his understanding of *htîpûtâ*.

[33] Evagrius, Cent. 5.83. All references to the Centuries of Evagrius in the Introduction and notes refer to: *Les six centuries des "Kephalia Gnostica" d'Évagre le Pontique*, ed./trans. Antoine Guillaumont (PO 28 fasc.1, 1959).

[34] Gregory of Nyssa saw the spiritual life as a continual growth. See P. Deseille, "Épectase," *DSpir* 4 (1960): 785–86. For Beulay's conclusions see "Centuries," 33–34 and "Jean de Dalyatha et sa Lettre XV," *PdO* (1971): 261–79, esp. 273–74.

[35] See Beulay, ES, 433–37.

The words used for Glory in the writings of John are *šûbhâ* and *téšbohtâ*. These together with *ʿîqârâ* and *škînta*[36] are the equivalent of *kavod* from the Hebrew root meaning heaviness and glory. *Kavod* is found to indicate power and majesty not only in nature and history, but also to describe an "outward manifestation of ultimate Reality."[37] Or as Morray-Jones' sources indicate "a primary materialisation of the divine essence,"[38] which is the *kavod* of Mt. Sinai (Ex. 33:18). The form of God on the throne in Ezekiel 1:26 is called the *kavod*/Glory of the Lord on the throne/Merkabah. This vision of Ezekiel probably inspired Deutero-Isaiah (ca. 550 BCE) in his vision of the eschatological glory (Is. 40:3-5). And there is little question that the Book of Daniel makes use of Ezekiel and that his "one like a son of man" is rooted in Ezekiel's Merkabah vision. Also Daniel as an apocalypse (ch.7, 8, 9, 10–12), forms part of the apocalyptic material which is taken up by Merkabah traditions.[39]

Perhaps one may suggest another possible influence in John of Dalyatha's glory imagery: the Glory of God or the *kavod* doctrine in Judaism and its development from Exodus to Ezekiel to Isaiah to Daniel and into Merkabah by way of Apocalyptic literature.[40] Deseille notes in fact that the biblical notion of Glory is practically absent from patristic sources until the

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[36] Later Jewish writings, such as in Hekhaloth and Merkabah traditions, tend to replace *kavod* with Shekhina. See G. Scholem, *On the Mystical Shape of the Godhead* (New York: Schocken Books, 1991), 147–57. On the significance of the Shekhina see also E. Urbach, *The Sages* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1979), 37–65. See also the chapter of Chernus, "'Nourished by the Splendour of the Shekinah': a mystical motif in Rabbinic Midrash," in Ira Chernus, *Mysticism in Rabbinic Judaism* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1982), 74–87. The term *škînta* (Shekhina) is found in Syriac writings and in liturgical texts. Isaac of Nineveh uses it several times in a long chapter on the cross. See Brock, *Isaac of Nineveh*, chap. 11. Sed sees a link between Jewish Targums and the use of *škînta* even in later 7th and 8th century Syriac writers. See N. Sed, "La Shekinta et ses amis 'araméens'" in MG, 233–42.

[37] G. Quispel, "Ezekiel 1:26 in Jewish Mysticism and Gnosis," *VC* 34 (1980): 1.

[38] See C. R. A. Morray-Jones, "Transformational Mysticism in the Apocalyptic-Merkabah Tradition," *JJS* 43 (1992): 3.

[39] Merkabah here refers to the esoteric Jewish traditions centered on the vision of God: the Glory of the Lord, seated on the celestial throne/Merkabah. For a brief overview see G. Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (New York: Schocken Books, 1961), 40–79.

[40] There are differing views about the historical sequence, especially the connection between Apocalyptic and Merkabah. See Martha Himmelfarb, "Heavenly Ascent and the Relationship of the Apocalypses and the Hekhalot Literature," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 49 (1988): 73–100.

third century.[41] This would coincide with the development, according to Scholem, of Jewish mystical documents. Originally they were thought to have been much later.[42] But, for example, already existing details of the Merkabah or the "throne of Glory" were elaborated in the first two centuries CE.

Direct links between John's glory imagery and the Merkabah tradition have yet to be established, but one can trace a development within Christian circles: for example, in Aphrahat, in Macarius, in Evagrius, in Stephen bar Sudhaili, and in Jacob of Serug.

In Aphrahat, particularly in his Demonstration 14, various scholars have noted a connection with apocalyptic traditions. Golitzin also sees glory imagery in it and even allusions to Hekhaloth literature.[43]

Scholem himself notes how Macarius offers a new explanation of the vision of Ezekiel and the human soul's becoming the throne of Glory which Scholem sees as a mystical reinterpretation of the Merkabah.[44]

Evagrius demonstrates a similar reworking of Isaiah's vision (Is. 6:1). As Stewart suggests: "What Isaiah saw with his 'prophetic eye,' says Evagrius, was his own truest self (his 'rational nature'), become the 'throne of God' by receiving knowledge of God."[45]

In the sixth century there is mention by Stephen bar Sudhaili, probable author of the Book of Hierotheos, of the vision of the throne by the mind which Guillaumont indicates is taken from Jewish mysticism.[46]

Finally in Jacob of Serug's beautiful homily: "On the Chariot which Ezekiel the Prophet saw," one finds examples from the Merkabah tradition. Golitzin notes that both Jacob and the rabbis are concerned about the possibility of experiencing Ezekiel's vision of the throne of Glory.[47]

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[41] P. Deseille, "Gloire de Dieu (chez les Pères de l'Église)," *DSpir* 39–40 (1967): 421–63. For the biblical notion of glory, see M. Weinfeld, "*kābōd*," *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* 7 (1995) 22–38.

[42] See Scholem, *Mystical Shape*, 20.

[43] See A. Golitzin, "Recovering the 'Glory of Adam': 'Divine Light' Traditions and the Christian Literature of Fourth-Century Syro-Mesopotamia," *The Dead Sea Scrolls as Background to Postbiblical Judaism*, ed. James Rohr Davila (Brill: Leiden-Boston, 2003), 275–308.

[44] Scholem, *Major Trends*, 79.

[45] Columba Stewart, "Imageless Prayer in Evagrius Ponticus," *JECS* 9 (2001): 173–204, esp. 200.

[46] See article of A. Guillaumont, "Étienne bar Soudaili," *DSpir* 4 (1960): 1481–88.

[47] See A. Golitzin, "The Image and Glory of God in Jacob of Serug's Homily,

COMPANIONS ON THE WAY

Our companions on this path of Glory, from Exodus through the Syriac tradition and into Byzantine mysticism, culminating in Gregory of Palamas, are the angels.[48] A simple reading of the Letters offers a surprisingly large quantity of references to angels: description of them; their contacts with humans; quality of the relationship. Many of John's descriptions can be traced to Pseudo-Dionysius: "their beauty similar to God and united with his Glory" (CH 165A); "their simplicity and their ability to be in whatever place they desire" (CH 333B); "their multitudes" (CH 321A).[49]

John speaks of the contacts, and the converse and familiarity (*ʿényânâ*) between angels and the soul. The Angel of Providence (or Guardian Angel) shows his love and affection and how the Angel rejoices to be caring for him and utters in him "encouragements and compliments and comforts him" especially at the time of prayer, but at other times as well.[50]

Angels teach and transmit mystical graces from God to man.[51] But this teaching, even when done as purification, is never performed solely as a function, but with great love: "Oh how amazing is the love which they show to him who is thus mingled (*ethallat*) with them" (Letter 4.5). And this love is never an end in itself, but leads the soul to God. Thus the grace of the Spirit purifies and sanctifies the soul by means of the angels. And in the future age, God reveals himself directly.

Finally, one may ask of the quality of this relationship. In Letter 4.5, the soul recognizes in the angels his kindred. He realizes that not only does

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'On the Chariot that Ezekiel the Prophet Saw'," *SVTQ* 47:3–4 (2003): 323–364.

[48] Here is intended not a 'history of angels' but rather an overview of "Glory" from the Sinai experience to Gregory of Palamas, as some would see similarities between John of Dalyatha's vision of Glory and Palamite hesychasm, see Beulay, ES, 463.

[49] Quotations of John are taken from Discourse 14, "On prayer," Vat. 124, 314a–316a. References to Celestial Hierarchy are as found in *Pseudo-Dionysius, The Complete Works*, tr. Colm Luibheid (CWS, 1987). Beulay lists other quotes from Pseudo-Dionysius suggested by Discourse 14, see ES, 367–68.

[50] See Discourse 7, "On the love of the holy angels," Vat. 124, 304a–b.

[51] Isaac also speaks of this mediation: "…without the mediation of angels our intellect will not be able to attain to the revelations and insights which lead to that essential divine vision which is the true revelation of mysteries." Alfeyev sees influence of Ps.-Dionysius here. See H. Alfeyev, *The Spiritual World of Isaac the Syrian* (CS 175, 2000), 227–28. But angels endowed with divine knowledge also appear in apocalyptic and rabbinic literature as teachers of men. This is the so-called "whisper of the angels."

he have familiarity (*ʿényânâ*) with them but that he is united with them. Being led beyond the ties of this world, those who love are henceforth united to those who love in an ineffable dignity which is a resemblance (*dumyâ*) to the angels of light and fellowship with them.

With such specific words of unity, resemblance, and mixture, one might ask if this indicates the soul's becoming an angel or "like an angel." Monastic tradition, especially in the East, has always applied "angelic life" to monastic life, describing the heavenly character of a life in the presence of God, wholly consecrated to the glorifying of that presence, thus equal to the angels, "isaggelos." But the tradition out of which John is speaking seems to be saying something more specific. Perhaps the influence is Evagrian. According to Guillaumont,[52] Evagrius says clearly that those who let themselves be taught by the angels will become angels in the future world because to become an angel and to receive angelic functions is the same thing and that what defines an angel is not nature but function.[53]

Ephrem is another witness within Syriac tradition concerning this angelic life.[54] He calls angels "our companions" (*ḳnâtê*, Hymns of Faith 46:8). And though they are far superior to man, the nature of the angels and that of the soul being different and distinct, man is capable of becoming a spiritual being through the process of divinization/theosis begun at baptism: "The Angels and the Watchers rejoice over that which is born of the Spirit and of water: / they rejoice that by fire and by the Spirit, / the corporeal have become spiritual. / The Seraphins who sing "Holy" rejoice, / that they who are made holy have been increased... Baptism is bringing forth / the heavenly from the earthly!"[55] This divinization/theosis does not mean man's becoming God or equal to God,[56] but may indicate a way of

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[52] See A. Guillaumont, *Les "Kephalia Gnostica" d'Évagre le Pontique et l'histoire de l'origènisme chez les Grecs et chez les Syriens* (Paris, 1962), 249–52.

[53] Babai, commenting on Evagrius, rejected this idea saying that there is no transformation into the nature of angels, but that those who have been instructed by angels in this world will be associated with them in their glory, not their nature. See Guillaumont, *"Kephalia Gnostica,"* 283–85.

[54] See P. J. Botha, "Fire Mingled with the Spirit: St. Ephrem's Views on Angels and the Angelic Life of Christians," *Harp* 8–9 (1995–96): 95–104.

[55] Hymns for the Feast of the Epiphany 6:7–8, tr. John Gwynn in *Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers*, 2nd series, vol. 13 (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1983). Ephrem, like John, situates this process of transformation within the sacramental system, beginning with baptism, which is a fundamental difference from Messalianism.

[56] See Brock, *Luminous Eye*, 148–54.

understanding companionship with the angels through God's heavenly gifts (Hymns of the Church 49:2).

Could John's angelology also be influenced by apocalyptic traditions? There is, for example, Enoch's transformation: "And I looked at myself, and I was like one of the glorious ones, and there was no apparent difference."[57] And again in the Ascension of Isaiah: "And I was transformed again and became like an angel... and I sang praises with them."[58] Himmelfarb considers this to be very significant and notes that such a claims of the achievement of angelic status appear within eight early Jewish and Christian apocalypses.[59] Further study of the relationship between apocalyptic/Merkabah writings and early monastic literature, especially Syriac, may yield more light on this subject of angelic fellowship, so prominent in the writings of John of Dalyatha.[60]

MESSALIANISM

Evidence of Messalianism can be found in Mesopotamia and Asia Minor from the fourth and fifth centuries. Messalian (*msâllyânâ* from the root *sl'*, "to pray") indicates that prayer was the chief concern. Principally, they held baptism and the other sacraments to be ineffective against man's indwelling devil and that only prayer and asceticism could free one from passion and desire.[61]

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[57] See 2 Enoch 9:19, tr. A. Pennington in *The Apocryphal Old Testament*, ed. H. F. D. Sparks (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998). Idel cites certain interpreters of Jewish tradition who consider the transformation of man into an angel as the goal of Scripture. See M. Idel, "Enoch is Metatron," *Immanuel* 24–25 (1990): 220–40, esp. 236. See also Morray-Jones, "Transformational Mysticism," 7–11.

[58] Ascension of Isaiah 8, 30–37, tr. R. H. Charles in Sparks, *Apocryphal O.T.*

[59] See Martha Himmelfarb, *Ascent to Heaven in Jewish and Christian Apocalypses* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), Introduction.

[60] See article of A. Golitzin, "Earthly Angels and Heavenly Man: the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, Niketas Stethatos, and the Tradition of 'Interiorized Apocalyptic' in Eastern Christian Ascetical and Mystical literature," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 55 (2001): 125–53.

[61] There are various lists of Messalian doctrines. Stewart analyzes them and sets forth ten major themes running through the charges. Doctrinal themes: the presence of an indwelling demon in each human soul; the inefficacy of baptism for the expulsion of the demon; the sole efficacy of prayer for the expulsion of the demon; the coming of the Holy Spirit or the heavenly Bridegroom; liberation from passions (sometimes called `apátheia). Concerning practices: claims about visions and prophecy; avoidance of work and the desire for sleep; excessive sleep and claims that dreams are prophetic; disregard for ecclesiastical communion and

Ephrem mentions Messalians in his Hymns against Heresies.[62] The *Synodicon Orientale* records fifth and sixth century synodal condemnations of the Messalians.[63] Babai wrote a whole treatise against them, unfortunately lost, but even in his commentary on the Centuries of Evagrius, the subject comes up often. Thomas of Marga records several accusations made in the seventh and eighth centuries against individuals or monasteries.[64] Included among the accused was Mar Afnimaran, founder of the monastery frequented by John of Dalyatha as a youth.

John was accused by Patriarch Timothy I at the Synod in 786/787 of various Messalian tendencies, particularly of saying that the divinity of Christ was seen by his humanity. That other East Syrians accused him of saying that Christ could see God and therefore that the soul could aspire to this, may have been simply an East Syrian (Nestorian)[65] rejection of a Chalcedonian tendency. Beulay, however, points to the numerous times that John insists that the soul sees God's Glory and never his Nature. Further he maintains that there is nothing in the writings of John of Dalyatha that can be shown to be Messalian. He does allow the possibility that at the time of the accusations by Timothy, disciples of John could have removed things from his writings, although no evidence is given for this. It is thought that John died before the Synod, so was spared the sorrow of Timothy's anathema. Isho Bar Nun, who became Patriarch after Timothy, from 823–27, rehabilitated John as well as Joseph Hazzaya and John the Solitary, not finding anything in their writings worthy of criticism.[66]

In his important study, Columba Stewart concludes that the charges brought against the Messalians were not unusual. Other groups were

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structures; denial, perjury, and prevarication. See Columba Stewart, OSB, *'Working the Earth of the Heart,' The Messalian Controversy in History, Texts and Language to AD 431* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 52–56.

[62] See Stewart's view of Ephrem's position, *'Earth of the Heart'*, 15–18. In the same section of his book Stewart includes other useful patristic evidence concerning the Messalian controversy.

[63] *Synodicon Orientale*, ed. J. B. Chabot (Paris, 1902), 301–3; 374–75; 406–7; 607; 629.

[64] Thomas of Marga, *Book of Superiors*, ed. E. A. Wallis Budge (London, 1893), t.2, 95–97; 121–23.

[65] On the implications of this terminology, see S. P. Brock, "The 'Nestorian' Church: a Lamentable Misnomer," *Bulletin John Rylands Library* 78 (1996): 23–35.

[66] Ishodenah says that the judgment against Joseph Hazzaya may have been motivated by jealousy on the part of Timothy. See Chabot, "'Livre de la chasteté'," #125. See also Beulay, "Lettre XV," 269. He suggests that John may have been the victim of jealousy as well.

similarly accused. What does seem distinctive are issues of language and that "the 'Messalians' and the controversy which followed them were an irruption into the Hellenistic world of ascetical practices and imagistic language far more characteristic of Syriac Christianity than of the imperial Church centred on Constantinople."[67]

PRESENT TRANSLATION

This present translation has been made from the critical edition of the Syriac text as established by Robert Beulay:

La Collection des Lettres de Jean de Dalyatha
Patrologia Orientalis 39.3 180
Belgium, Brepols, 1978

In addition, ample use has been made of Beulay's commentaries and his several articles.[68] I also am indebted to him for his many scriptural references cited in this translation. Scholarship owes him great gratitude for the amount and precision of the work he has done on John.

Soon there will be a critical edition of the Discourses with English translation by Brian Colless, as well as the edition by Beulay, and Colless also promises a monograph on John. Both will be significant additions to the discussion about John.

Finally, I thank Sebastian Brock for his help with this translation and his many insights into John's thinking. Also, to resolve some of the more difficult passages, Brian Colless graciously allowed me to consult his work on the Letters. And the Letters are the better for the careful reading and comments of David J. Lane +.

My father, William, during whose latter years of infirmity these Letters were being translated, understood John's symbolic world, may he rest in peace.

For the questions that may be left unanswered by the inadequacies of this translation and commentary, the reader is encouraged to follow John's opening remarks to the Letters: "Reading them one will understand," reading them with faith and wonder.

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[67] See Stewart, *'Earth of the Heart'*, 234–40. G. Quispel draws similar conclusions in his "The Discussion of Judaic Christianity" *VC* 22 (1968): 89–90.

[68] In addition to his *La lumière sans forme*, and *L'Enseignement spirituel de Jean de Dalyatha*, four of his articles are quoted amply in this work: "Centuries," "Précisions," "Lettre XV," and "Formes de Lumière et Lumière sans forme: Le thème de la lumière dans la mystique de Jean de Dalyatha," MG, 131–41.

This beautiful prayer from the Discourses seems to sum up the gentle genius of John: the hope which he offers of human transformation and the fulfillment of all desire rooted in the mysteries (symbols/sacraments) of the Christian life.

> O Christ, treasure of all goodly things, grant me perfect repentance and an aching heart that comes out in love to seek you. Without you I am a stranger to everything; grant me, O Good One, your grace. May the Father who begot you, from his bosom where you were concealed from eternity, renew in me the features of your likeness. Though I have forsaken you, do not forsake me; though I have abandoned you and gone away from you, come out to seek me and restore me to the fold; add me to the dear lambs of your flock, and feed me with them in the pasture of your holy mysteries, whose source is a pure heart wherein is seen the light of your revelations; that is the repose of the toilers who labour to that end through sufferings and torments of every kind. Our Saviour, may we all be counted worthy of it through thy gracious loving-kindness.[69]

[69] Found in Discourse 18, "On flight from the world," Vat. 124, 343b–346a.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CS	Cistercian Studies Series (Cistercian Publications, Kalamazoo)
CSCO	Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium (Louvain)
CWS	Classics of Western Spirituality (Paulist Press, New York)
DSpir	*Dictionnaire de Spiritualité* (Paris)
ES	R. Beulay, *L'Enseignement spirituel de Jean de Dalyatha. Mystique syro-oriental du VIIIe siècle*, *Théologie Historique* 83 (Paris, 1990).
Harp	*The Harp*: a Review of Syriac and Oriental Studies (Kottayam)
JECS	*Journal of Early Christian Studies* (Baltimore)
JJS	*Journal of Jewish Studies* (Oxford)
JTS	*Journal of Theological Studies* (Oxford)
LM	R.Beulay, *La lumière sans forme. Introduction a l'étude de la mystique chrétienne syro-orientale* (Belgium: Éditions de Chevetogne, 1987).
MG	*Mélanges Antoine Guillaumont*: *Contributions a l'étude des christianismes orientaux* , Cahiers d'Orientalisme 20 (Geneva, 1988).
OCP	*Orientalia Christiana Periodica* (Rome)
OrSyr	*L'Orient Syrien* (Vernon)
PdO	*Parole de l'Orient* (Kaslik, Lebanon)
PO	Patrologia Orientalis (Turnhout)
SVTQ	*St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly*
SC	Sources Chrétiennes (Paris)
TS	*Theological Studies*
VC	*Vigiliae Christianae* (Leiden)

TEXT AND TRANSLATION

Letters of the Saint, the great Elder,
sent by him to various persons.

Reading them one will understand their subject.

لاه لي تالا بكه بمبعا ههحا وحا:
وابطوت هده الله.

وهم منهم هههلحا الله بعهم.

LETTER 1

[To a great Elder of his acquaintance][1]

1. To the one, who by the divine light poured out in his soul, examines things hidden and learns the mysteries of the Spirit through the Spirit; who through the many-splendored Star[2] which rises from his heart, in the light is united to the light; in whom the Spirit has brought into being the gifts which have filled the ends of the earth; who inhales the Fragrance of Life[3] through the Living One, but is constrained to make it known by the stench of death.
2. My master, father of saints! Behold: for some time I have been waiting to meet your person, full of holy things and clothed in God, but the lameness of my feet hindered me until now. May the Spirit which is in you testify to you concerning this excuse.
3. May Our Lord grant me to see your face and gladden my heart from my adversities before the hour of the sun's setting on your departure for that luminous place of all lights—eternal life—lest, there in the clouds of the glory of your Lord, you be hidden from me and I not be worthy to see you because no one may enter that place who has not learned to experience it here below. For the eyes of one's mind are dazzled by the rays of light of the clouds which are outside of there and the mind is hindered from seeing. But the mind in which here below the radiance of Life has shone forth for its delight, when the sun has set from the pupil of its eye, it distributes its inheritance and leaves to meet the manifestation of the great Sun, the light of the heavenly worlds.

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[1] The titles, according to Beulay, were probably not written by John. See Beulay, *Collection des Lettres*, 43.

[2] Many-splendored Star: the root of this image is to be found in Heb. 1:3; Christ, the splendor of the Glory of God. The expression occurs several times in the Letters and in the Discourses with variations.

[3] For a discussion of Fragrance of Life (*rîhâ, d-haye*) as a reality of the senses through which God acts, see Susan Ashbrook Harvey, "St. Ephrem on the Scent of Salvation," *JTS* ns 49 (1998): 109–128. The article includes references to both St. Ephrem and Jacob of Serug.

ا

.ههنده نح لحا بم لحها لهكا الهمم

1. حاتة :نمن الهتهط بعا ههعدها لهمك الموهدجك واب

4. As regards speaking about the manner of God's revelation in sanctified minds, it is not permitted to the tongue. But the explanation of this great mystery is placed in purified and luminous minds and it is immersed in silence, because it is in this place of wonder that God makes himself known to those who love Him. He amazes them with his beauty, and with wonder He silences their movements by the vision of his mysteries. Because this place of marvelous visions is the place of amazement, it is also enclosed with a wall of silence. And when the mind wants to attempt to bring the mystery out from there to the place of words and examine it, the mind is confronted with the boundary of silence and becomes silent.
5. The place whose language is silence, how will its mysteries be explained? And since the mysteries amaze the inhabitants of the place in silence, if they are revealed to those who are not accustomed, they will stand in astonishment, deprived of all movement and feeling. The name of the place is "wonder," and the explanation of its mysteries is also "amazement." But if it is fitting for speech to name it, it is a silence without movement and without any designation. It astonishes its inhabitants with its splendor and establishes them in its wonder and bathes those who see it with its inexplicable sweetness. May the bold then be restrained by silence and be bridled with the muzzle of stillness. Since now my tongue is numbed by the chill of my evil deeds and not able to declare the blessings of the partakers of God's mysteries, I take refuge in mercy so as to seek your favor, O treasurer of mysteries, who dwells in the place of silence and shines with the splendours of the One who is concealed, who grants the vision of his glory to those who love Him.

4. وإذن في أحسن حالاته يكون الحق الذي يحميه: الحق الذي لا أحد يستطيع أن يهدده. إلا هيم فعلى أي حال لا أحد يستطيع أن يهدد أحداً. على الأقل ليس بطريقة مباشرة: فليس هناك أحد يستطيع أن يقول: «أنا أكرهك لأنك تعتقد أن الأرض مسطحة». أو: «أنا أكرهك لأنك تعتقد أن الأرض كروية». أو: «أنا أكرهك لأنك تعتقد أن الأرض ليست كروية ولا مسطحة». أو: «أنا أكرهك لأنك تعتقد أن الأرض ليست كروية ولا مسطحة». أو: «أنا أكرهك لأنك تعتقد أن الأرض ليست كروية ولا مسطحة».

5. لا. لم يكن هذا هو الحال. كان هناك أحد يستطيع أن يقول: «أنا أكرهك لأنك تعتقد أن الأرض مسطحة». كان هناك أحد يستطيع أن يقول: «أنا أكرهك لأنك تعتقد أن الأرض كروية». كان هناك أحد يستطيع أن يقول: «أنا أكرهك لأنك تعتقد أن الأرض ليست كروية ولا مسطحة». كان هناك أحد يستطيع أن يقول: «أنا أكرهك لأنك تعتقد أن الأرض ليست كروية ولا مسطحة». كان هناك أحد يستطيع أن يقول: «أنا أكرهك لأنك تعتقد أن الأرض ليست كروية ولا مسطحة». كان هناك أحد يستطيع أن يقول: «أنا أكرهك لأنك تعتقد أن الأرض ليست كروية ولا مسطحة».

6. Bestow on me the prayer of mercy, that although I be a stranger to the blessing, I may not depart from the mountain of salvation and become fodder for that fire of Sodom which destroys the wicked.[4] Our father, pray for me, I ask you with tears, because I bend my head in shame from this. And the tongue of my intelligence is muzzled by the confident and familiar intercession of those who love. My feet are lame from having walked without protection; they were bloodied on the stumbling-blocks of the Evil One, and they were bruised in the snares of those who seek out wickedness. Since the light of my eyes was removed from me through my wicked deeds, and I was not able to see these things—prepare for me the compassion of your prayer as a healing for my bruises. And may your mind, whose movements are illumined by the meditation which sees all, visit me in my grief. May Our Lord grant me to be worthy of the blessing to perceive you in feeling, even if I am otherwise blind.
7. Do not blame me for being stupid like a fool. May the blessing of the eye of your heart, which gazes on hidden things, cover over my evil deeds.

[4] cf. Gen. 19:24.

6. ففي حين أن الحكم على الشيء يتبعه الحكم على ما يتضمنه، فإن الحكم على الشيء لا يتضمن بالضرورة الحكم على ما يتضمنه. فالحكم على الشيء يتضمن الحكم على ما يتضمنه، ولكن الحكم على ما يتضمنه لا يتضمن الحكم على الشيء

LETTER 2

[To another Elder]

1. The beauty of your love is marvelous, concealing what is shameful. Your love has not rejected the one who turned from the abhorrent world and cast it off and threw it from him as one who could not bear the sight of it and its wicked ways, lest he be defiled by the world. But perhaps your mind did not descend from the exalted place, which is near the Most High, to search in a dark place to know my shady ways. Or rather has your mind taken on the resemblance of the great Sun of all the worlds, to make the splendors of his grace give light to those sitting in darkness? But because I am not able to repay these things which your grace did for my wickedness, may the Good One repay you by his visits with gifts of all which your soul desires: these things whose desire is not fleeting. Amen.
2. You remind me: "Do not forget me, lest I go astray"; and "If I forget you, then I will be truly an errant one." But this refuge of yours is feeble and its meaning has been taken off in captivity by a captor—and not the One who captivates his own by his beauty, as you said. However I believe that what you desire will be given to me by Him who promised He would not delude the wish of whoever desires what is good.[1]
3. My right hand is not able to describe in figures the One who represents all form. Take away everything from before you, that He who is hidden within everything might be found alone in your vision. Blessed is the one from before whose view earth—his mother—has been taken away, and in the Father of his soul for its duality there will be a journey in simplicity.

[1] cf. Matt. 7:9–11; Lk. 9:11–13.

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هذا هو الحق والباطل.

1. محمد ﷺ هو رسول الله: أخبرنا الحسن بن محمد بن إسحاق: ثنا يونس بن بكير: ثنا ابن إسحاق عن يزيد بن أبي حبيب عن مرثد بن عبد الله اليزني عن عبد الله بن عمرو بن العاص قال: قال رسول الله ﷺ: «إن آل أبي فلان ليسوا لي بأولياء، إنما وليي الله وصالح المؤمنين، ولكن لهم رحم أبلها ببلالها». قال ابن إسحاق: وحدثني عبد الله بن أبي بكر عن عمرة بنت عبد الرحمن عن عائشة زوج النبي ﷺ أنها قالت: سمعت رسول الله ﷺ يقول: «إن آل أبي فلان ليسوا لي بأولياء، إنما وليي الله وصالح المؤمنين».
2. هذا الحق من ربك. الحق: الله. الممترين: الشاكين. أي: هذا الذي أخبرتك به من أمر عيسى هو الحق من ربك، لا ما يقوله النصارى من أمره.
3. لا يؤمنون. لا يصدقون. أي: لا يقرون بأن الله خالقهم ورازقهم وحدهم لا شريك له، ولا يعبدونه وحده، بل يعبدون معه غيره من الأنداد والأوثان. فأخبر تعالى أن أكثر الناس لا يؤمنون بالله إلا وهم مشركون.

4. O mystery, wonder[2] makes marvelers of those who walk in the light of the Lord in a clear and beautiful place! Where has everything gone from before me so that only the Lord of all is visible? Where I am I do not know, because my heart is ravished by the beauty of the Beautiful One.
5. Blessed is the one who embraces You and even when asleep inhales your sweet fragrance. Blessed is the one who sits and watches your splendors united to him like the sun's rays to its sphere. Blessed is the one who sees his food changed into your likeness, who tastes it with his palate and it is changed into the delight of your sweetness. Blessed is the one who sees You mingled with his drink and he drinks and his heart exults in your favor. Blessed is the one who enters within himself and sees You in a wonderful vision and he marvels at the beauty of your wondrous mysteries which spring up from within him.

[2] The process of ecstasy begins with astonishment or wonder (*tehrâ*) and leads to helpless amazement or stupor (*témhâ*). *Tehrâ* sometimes indicates movement and *témhâ* the point of arrival where the spirit is without movement in the fulfillment of desire. The roots of wonder lie deep in Syriac tradition. Isaac quotes Theodore of Mopsuestia that *tehrâ* about God is the "unique science," see Homily 40 in P. Bedjan, *Mar Isaacus Ninivita de Perfectione Religiiosa* (Paris/Leipzig, 1909), 304. Ephrem is constantly amazed in wonder at the Incarnation and at the Eucharist, but also at all the created world as both Scripture and the natural world are revelatory. Wonder as described by John is perhaps even more symbolic than the use made of it by Ephrem, but they both see wonder as a revelation of the New World. See S. P. Brock, *Luminous Eye*, 43–44. For further discussion see Letter 12.

4. ﻻ ﻭﺍﺍ ﻣﻤﺒﻢ ﺍﻭﺍﻝ ﺣﺤﻤﺤﺤﻤﻝ ﻣﻤﺤﺤﻤﺤﻤﻝ ﺍﻭﺍﻝ ﻣﻤﺒﻢ ﺍﻭﺍ ﻣﻨﺎ
ﻻﻝ ﻫﻤﺎ ﻣﻔﻌﻤﻝ. ﻟﻠﻤﺎ ﻻﻝ ﻻ ﻣﻢ ﻣﻤﺤ. ﻭﻣﻨﺎ ﻻ
ﺣﺤﺠ ﻫﻤﻭ. ﺍﻨﺎ ﻧﺤﻢ ﻻ ﻟﻠﻨﺎ ﻟﻤﺎﻩ. ﺍﻟﻠﻤﻭ ﻭﺣﺴﻭ
ﻣﻔﻌﻤﻭ ﻣﻨﻔﻤﻤﻤ ﻣﻤﻤﻤ

6. My heart now is moved against the pen: I will break it because it is not able to describe here the wondrous beauties, for I see streams of living waters[3] flowing from the fount of blessings. And although they spring forth, they are covered with silence and are hidden. Do not find fault with me for being seized with folly here from the bubbling up of the wine which gladdens all, and for having forgotten what is mine. Every mind full of speech who enters this place is stopped from speech by silence, and from movements by astonishment over the mysteries. Here God shows his beauty to those who love Him. Here the soul sees itself and Christ who appears in it, and it rejoices in the vision of Him. Here it sees the marvelous beauties of the angels who stand in wonder before the glory of the One who lives eternally. Here the Holy Trinity is shown mysteriously and its Hypostases appear to the naked mind. Great is this mystery which is only seen by a limpid mind! Here the world to come is shown to the dead in Christ[4] in a mystery: this is God revealing Himself, World of worlds, New World,[5] the Creator of worlds who is a place for his rational creature. The Word is its food and his Drink its rejoicing; his Sun, its sun; his Garment, its clothing;[6] his Vision, its sight; his Knowledge, its understanding. By grace, his Likeness is its likeness:[7] the creature in its Creator sees itself as its Creator.

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[3] cf. Jn. 7:38.

[4] cf. 1 Thess. 4:16.

[5] New World (*ʿâlmâ hadtâ*): Mt. 19:28, Peshitta. The phrase occurs in the Odes of Solomon 33:12 and in Aphrahat, Demonstration 12:2. The image is especially common in the writings of John the Solitary who interprets the whole history of salvation and the nature of the spiritual life according to this hope in the New World. If after baptism one remains in a state of spiritual growth, one is already in the new life of the New World. See Bruce Bradley, "Jean le Solitaire," *DSpir* 8 (1974): 764–772. The phrase is found frequently in Isaac of Nineveh, for references see Brock, *Isaac of Nineveh*, ch. 5.5. In addition to its occurrences in John of Dalyatha's Letters, see also his Discourse 12, "On the mystery of the New World," Vat. 124, 328a–329b.

[6] On the use of clothing imagery to speak of the Incarnation, see S. P. Brock, "Clothing Metaphors as a means of Theological Expression in Syriac Tradition," ed. M. Schmidt *Typus, Symbol, Allegorie bei den östlichen Vätern und ihren Parallelen im Mittelalter* (Eichstätter Beiträge 4, Regensburg, 1982), 11–40.

[7] On the relation of image and likeness to the Prototype and the role of grace in this transformation, see Letter 29.

6. ⲁⲩⲱ ⲛⲓⲙ ⲉⲧⲃⲉ ⲡⲁⲓ

7. Everyone who finds these things finds the anticipated resurrection,[8] and all those who do not see them are still among the dead.

[8] cf. Eph. 2:16; Col. 2:12. The mystical life is seen by John as an "anticipated resurrection," fruit of baptism and Eucharist, making it clear how inappropriate is any charge of Messalianism. See Letters 4:7; 15:9; 47:4.

7. ﻟﻼ ﻭﺍﺟﺲ ﻫﺤﻲ: ﺍﺟﺲ ﺳﻌﺎ ﻣﻔﻌﺎ. ﻫﻼ
ﻭﺤﻫﺤﻲ ﻻ ﺑﺪﻩ: ﺣﺼﻼ ﺣﺎ ﻣﺘﺎ ﺍﻟﻨﻬﻮ٭

LETTER 3

[To a brother who once was his friend
but afterwards obeyed the Evil One and turning, reviled him.]

1. I greatly rejoice in reproaches and I count insults advantages. But you are saying: "So then why do you blame me for abusing you?" Listen, and I will tell you. For Our Lord has said: *I have a baptism with which I am to be baptized and I am anxious for its accomplishment.*[1] That is: "I am ready to die and I await burial." But it was not right for Judas, his friend, to betray Him.

[1] Lk. 12:50.

ولكن: يجب عليك أن تدرس بجد لكي تنجح.
لا يمكن لأحد أن يعيش حياة سعيدة دون أن يكون صحيحًا.

1. هل تعلم أن الأرض تدور حول الشمس. ولكن لا أحد يستطيع أن يراها وهي تدور. هل أنت مستعد لتصدق أن الأرض تدور حول الشمس؟ إذا كنت كذلك، فأنت على حق. ولكن لا أحد يستطيع أن يشعر بها. لا أحد يستطيع أن يقول: "أنا أشعر بالأرض وهي تدور حول الشمس". لا أحد يستطيع أن يشعر بالأرض وهي تدور حول الشمس. ولكن الأرض تدور حول الشمس.

LETTER 4

[To one of the solitaries]

1. Your title, my brother, is higher than your lineage. May your conduct also become like to those for whom you are named, so that your body might shine forth in its purity as also the solitaries shine by means of their purity. May your soul be freed of passionate thoughts. And as the solitaries are a burning fire, searching unceasingly for God, likewise may your gaze be unceasingly towards Him with his incessant praise in your heart so that your soul might take on the likeness of the solitaries.
2. Deprive yourself of food a little, but abstain completely from the company of men, especially those who are not diligent, so that despicable desire may be quenched within you. These are the sticks of our enemy with which he kindles this fire which is wickedly inflamed: contact with seculars, conversation with women, affection for young people whether of the world or those of one's own way of life. This last evil, for the servant of Christ, is worse than all the other evils, with its wicked companion, that is, friendship with the daughters of the Covenant.[1] The mother of all this brood of vipers is gluttony, together with the fellowship of brothers whose lives are void of ministry. When our soul is stripped of these it can no longer fall into the snares of the enemy and is able to fly swiftly to God and be saved in Him.[2] Even the body itself forgets its impure desire when it is deprived of these things, and though it stirs naturally in the body, the desire fades away without a struggle.

[1] Daughters of the Covenant: *qyâmâ* is a term rich in meanings including "covenant" and "resurrection." It refers to men and women who live a consecrated life. The concept, with roots in Aphrahat and in Ephrem, is characteriestic of the early Syriac Church. See S. H. Griffith, "Monks, 'Singles' and the 'Sons of the Covenant,' Reflections on Syriac Ascetic Terminology," in *Evlogema: Studies in Honor of Robert Taft* (Rome: 1993), 141–160.

[2] cf. Ps. 124:7.

؟

.لوبتسا لتنا مح بس لوحا ىحوإا

1. لوعا ىنحوا حاه .ىمومعاا مح وه حجا سا ىمومعه ىنحا مسهه .لبحاا لوحا لوفيح ىحهه .لوعا سعز ىنحا .لوعا ىنحوا حاه سا :ىلوعمح ىمعه .لوعاحه بح حوا لوعا حاه سا .لقا ىحهه مح لاحزا لوعا لوعاا لوعا حاه سا .لمحاا لسما لإوه لحه .لاحاحا لسما لإوه لحه .لإما لإوه ىنح حسا لوعا

3. I beg you, my brother, keep these admonitions of your friend. For our way of life is not casual but resembles that of the exalted Watchers.[3] Much sleep darkens the mind so that it does not distinguish these things. Watchfulness makes it a companion to the Seraphim and a stranger to human contact, while the desire of God is continually burning in it.
4. For as long as the passions are in the soul, O brother, a person is a city to himself full of the tumult of many people wherever he is. This is what David called *city*[4] and for deliverance from it he took refuge in the desert,[5] that is to say, liberation from passions. When a person separates from passions as from the city, then he finds the confidence to say to God: "*Henceforth who is my hope if not You, Lord.*"[6] And when the Good One sees that he abstains from everything, He makes him hear a voice gladdening and consoling: "*Take courage! Take courage! I will not forsake you again and I will not leave you. And wherever you go, I am with you.*"[7] And when he who was sitting in lamentation heard these things, childlike he cried out as a baby who has sensed his parent and says: "*Abba! Abba! Abba!*"[8]—in these moments only this is possible for him.

[3] The Syriac tradition frequently designates angels as Watchers (Daniel 4:13, 17). Sometimes the term means angel, other times one of the Cherubim and Seraphim. Watchers figure prominently in the pseudepigraphic and later Jewish mystical literature. In Merkabah texts such as 3 Enoch they are a separate order: "Above all these are four great princes called Watchers…their abode is opposite the throne of glory…they receive glory from the glory of the Almighty and are praised with the praise." See 3 Enoch 28:1–3.

[4] 2 Sam. 5:9.

[5] 2 Sam. 15:23.

[6] Ps. 39:7.

[7] Dt. 31:6-8.

[8] Rom. 8:15.

3. ﻧﺤﻦ ﻫﻮ . ﻣﻦ ﻟﻢ ﻟﻬﺎ ﻓﻬﻢ ﻧﻘﻮﻝ ﻗﻮﻣﻬﺎ ﻫﻮﻟﻬﺎ ﺳﻮ ﺇﻟﻰ
ﺍﻟﻨﻮﻉ . ﻟﻤﻮﻩ ﻳﺘﻜﻠﻢ ﻫﻮ ﻟﻤﻮﻩ ﺇﻟﺎ ﻭﺣﻲ: ﻫﻮ ﻟﻤﻌﻬﻢ
ﺍﻟﻨﻮﺣﻲ . ﻋﻮﻗﺒﻮ ﻟﺎ ﻫﻮﻟﻬﻢ ﻟﻮﻫﻮ ﻫﻮ ﻟﻤﻔﻬﻢ ﺍﻟﻠﻐﻬﻢ
ﻟﻠﻬﻢ ﻣﻦ ﻫﻮ ﻟﻨﻘﻠﻮﻩ .ﻫﻮ ﺇﻟﻬﻢ ﻟﻘﻬﻢ ﻟﻘﻮﻟﻬﻢ
ﺍﻟﻬﻢ. ﻫﻮﻟﻬﻢ ﻟﻬﻢ ﻟﻬﻢ ﻫﻮ ﻟﻬﻢ ﻫﻮ ﻟﻬﻢ ﻫﻮ

5. From this time forward, limpidity[9] makes him abide in wonder, and grace incessantly stirs up in him impulses which cannot be elaborated: briefly, impulses of the New World, mysteries, revelations, and insights concerning the Godhead which it is not permitted to reveal. Henceforth, he no longer remembers his worldly existence, nor bodily origin, nor human fellowship. The love of the One who brought him forth, the Father of all, gave him forgetfulness of everything by the transformation of his impulses. Those who love are henceforth united to those who love in an ineffable dignity which is a resemblance to the angels of light and fellowship with them. Oh, how amazing is the love which they show to him who thus is mingled[10] with them and who recognizes in them his kindred!

[9] Limpidity (*šapyûtâ*) or transparency of soul opens one to revelation and entry to the New World. There are two references to it in biblical writings: 4 Esdras 6:32 and Apoc. Baruch 66:1. In the fourth century the term occurs several times in Ephrem. In his Hymns on the Nativity 3.8, he refers the term to Christ. But in the works of John the Solitary (early 5th cent.), one finds very frequent usage of *šapyûtâ*. See *Jean d'Apamée Dialogues et Traités*, trans. R. Lavenant (SC 311, 1984). In the Introduction, Lavenant notes a passage in the writings of John the Solitary where Christ himself is referred to as the model of limpidity. The term also occurs frequently in Isaac of Nineveh, as well as in Joseph Hazzaya, a contemporary of John of Dalyatha. In translating *šapyûtâ*, limpidity has been used almost exclusively here so as not to lose the significance of the term, see G. Bunge, "Le 'lieu de la limpidité': a propros d'un apophthegme enigmatique: Budge II, 494" *Irenikon* 55 (1982): 7–18.

[10] Mingled (from *hlt*) is used by Syriac writers to describe various kinds of close union: of the believer with the Holy Spirit, with Jesus, and even the union of soul and body. John uses it here to describe the relationship between angels and humanity. See also Letters 19 and 31. For the importance of the term in Syriac literature, see Columba Stewart, OSB, *'Working the Earth of the Heart,': The Messalian Controversy in History, Texts, and Language to AD 431* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 170–203.

5. ومحا مكمه الملاء الفقه الكتب محمد. حه محمد الملاء الفقه الكتب محمد لا خاره. حه محمد الملاء الفقه الكتب محمد نقه ابا حقوق الفقه حه ولا فهم. ومحا محمد الفقه الكتب محمد: نقه الله محمد وحمد الله الفقه الكتب محمد لا محمد الكتب الفقه وحمد الله الفقه الكتب محمد. لا محمد الكتب الفقه وحمد الله الفقه الكتب محمد لا فهم. لا محمد الكتب الفقه وحمد الله الفقه الكتب محمد. محمد حمد وهه وحه الفقه الكتب محمد الكتب الفقه الكتب محمد. محمد الكتب الفقه الكتب محمد. الكتب وحمد الفقه الكتب محمد. ولا وحا وهوحه الكتب محمد. الكتب وحمد الفقه الكتب محمد. ولا وحا وهوحه الكتب محمد. وحه محمد الفقه الكتب محمد. وحه محمد الفقه الكتب محمد. وحه محمد الفق

6. The pen burns from the strength of your fire, O Jesus, and my right hand has stopped writing; my eyes are scorched by the rays of your beauty. The ground on which I have been proceeding has been altered before me. My intelligence has been astonished by the marvel which You provoke and henceforth I know myself as not existing. A flame has been kindled in my bones,[11] and springs have burst forth to water my flesh all over lest it be consumed. O purifying furnace in which the Craftsman has cleansed his creation! O garment of light which our will has stripped off from us, with which we are now reclothed from within the fire![12] Allow me, my Lord, to give what is holy to your children; I do not give <it> to the dogs, but to those who love You I give the pearls which I bring up from your bosom, O glorious Sea. I do not throw them to the swine lest they be trampled with their feet.[13]

[11] Lam. 1:3.

[12] In the Syriac tradition, fire imagery plays an important role in the context of baptism. And it is at Christian baptism that the garment of light or the robe of glory, lost at the Fall and restored at Christ's baptism, becomes available again to humankind. See S. P. Brock, *The Holy Spirit in the Syrian Baptismal Tradition*, The Syrian Church Series 9 (Poona, 1979), 11–18. See Brock, "Robe of Glory." See also Brock, *Luminous Eye*, 85–97.

[13] cf. Matt. 7:6.

6. بعم كله مسا مع حوار وعوم معمد. وعمع مع مسم ليعوه
وكعملك. الملكها حتم مع تكعم معوعم.
كله معكملا. لمعه أوا وحه وحا معه مع أسلعاه
مع ملأ لا سا لمعم كد لاله. وحي أوعلك معه
لمقم لمعم متقلله. معتكي الملحمكه أجم. لا
معه وحه لمحه أوه ٥ا. عنكم لا كله تعكمك
كعكملك لمعم مع مكعاو أوعه لكلها ٥ا. لمعه ملكبكي
معه ك هعا. أوه ه مع لعه كله كمعبكو
لا معه كحكما لاه لا. عتمك لعوه لكلو
لا لعمه مكعنتك لمعبه لعه وحه مع الملتي
لا لا وعا وعلا لاتبرم لا حتي الملعو لاه لا.

7. Glory to You! How amazing are your mysteries! Blessed are those who love You because they always glow with your beauty and You make a gift of Yourself to them. This is the anticipated resurrection[14] of the dead in Christ[15] of which the blessed Paul spoke. Blessed are you, O solitaries, because with the Only-Begotten One you have become an only son of God by union with Him.[16] And because of this, mysteries of the Father are revealed to you and boldly you say: "*The mind of Christ is ours*;[17] He has appeared in our hearts and *given light, by the glory of God*.[18] Woe is me who of my own accord have deprived myself of these things and have prepared for myself my portion of darkness in this world."
8. My God, strip me by your grace from the garment of passions—that Gehenna of darkness—and clothe me with the robe of your holy light which is itself the New World, before I go out from the body. Give me, my Lord, as nourishment the beauty of your vision and as a joy-giving beverage give me the revelations of your mysteries hidden in the bosom of your Being. Make me, my Lord, a member in the body of your Only-Begotten that I might experience the mystery of union with You in as much as my weak nature is able.

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[14] cf. Eph. 2:6; Col. 2:12.

[15] 1 Thess. 4:16.

[16] Solitary (*îhîdâyâ*) or single one describes a solitary monk as opposed to one living in community. But the term goes beyond celibacy or eremitical life to indicate a unity within the Solitary and his unity with God. In the New Testament *îhîdâyâ* is the Only Begotten Jesus Christ (Jn. 1:14, 18; 3:16, 18; 1 Jn. 4:9). And Aphrahat says of Christ: "the Only Begotten (*îhîdâyâ*) Who is from the bosom of his Father shall cause all solitaries (*îhîdâyê*) to rejoice," Demonstration, 6:6. On use of the term in Aphrahat, see Naomi Koltun-Fromm, "Yokes of the Holy-Ones: The Embodiment of a Christian Vocation," *Harvard Theological Review* 94:2 (2001): 205–18. See also T. K. Koonammakkal, "Ephrem's Ideas on Singleness," *Hugoye*: *Journal of Syriac Studies* 2 (1999). And see S. H. Griffith, "'Singles' in God's service: thoughts on the Ihidaye from the works of Aphrahat and Ephrem the Syrian," *Harp* 4 (1991): 145–159.

[17] 1 Cor. 2:16.

[18] 2 Cor. 4:6.

7. ﻫﻮ ﺍﻟﺬﻱ ﺧﻠﻖ ﺍﻟﻠﻴﻞ ﻭﺍﻟﻨﻬﺎﺭ ﻭﺍﻟﺸﻤﺲ ﻭﺍﻟﻘﻤﺮ ﻛﻞ ﻓﻲ ﻓﻠﻚ ﻳﺴﺒﺤﻮﻥ. ﻭﻫﻮ ﺍﻟﺬﻱ ﺟﻌﻞ ﺍﻟﻠﻴﻞ ﻭﺍﻟﻨﻬﺎﺭ ﺧﻠﻔﺔ ﻟﻤﻦ ﺃﺭﺍﺩ ﺃﻥ ﻳﺬﻛﺮ ﺃﻭ ﺃﺭﺍﺩ ﺷﻜﻮﺭﺍ. ﻭﻋﺒﺎﺩ ﺍﻟﺮﺣﻤﻦ ﺍﻟﺬﻳﻦ ﻳﻤﺸﻮﻥ ﻋﻠﻰ ﺍﻷﺭﺽ ﻫﻮﻧﺎ ﻭﺇﺫﺍ ﺧﺎﻃﺒﻬﻢ ﺍﻟﺠﺎﻫﻠﻮﻥ ﻗﺎﻟﻮﺍ ﺳﻼﻣﺎ. ﻭﺍﻟﺬﻳﻦ ﻳﺒﻴﺘﻮﻥ ﻟﺮﺑﻬﻢ ﺳﺠﺪﺍ ﻭﻗﻴﺎﻣﺎ. ﻭﺍﻟﺬﻳﻦ ﻳﻘﻮﻟﻮﻥ ﺭﺑﻨﺎ ﺍﺻﺮﻑ ﻋﻨﺎ ﻋﺬﺍﺏ ﺟﻬﻨﻢ ﺇﻥ ﻋﺬﺍﺑﻬﺎ ﻛﺎﻥ ﻏﺮﺍﻣﺎ. ﺇﻧﻬﺎ ﺳﺎﺀﺕ ﻣﺴﺘﻘﺮﺍ ﻭﻣﻘﺎﻣﺎ. ﻭﺍﻟﺬﻳﻦ ﺇﺫﺍ ﺃﻧﻔﻘﻮﺍ ﻟﻢ ﻳﺴﺮﻓﻮﺍ ﻭﻟﻢ ﻳﻘﺘﺮﻭﺍ ﻭﻛﺎﻥ ﺑﻴﻦ ﺫﻟﻚ ﻗﻮﺍﻣﺎ.

8. ﻭﺍﻟﺬﻳﻦ ﻻ ﻳﺪﻋﻮﻥ ﻣﻊ ﺍﻟﻠﻪ ﺇﻟﻬﺎ ﺁﺧﺮ ﻭﻻ ﻳﻘﺘﻠﻮﻥ ﺍﻟﻨﻔﺲ ﺍﻟﺘﻲ ﺣﺮﻡ ﺍﻟﻠﻪ ﺇﻻ ﺑﺎﻟﺤﻖ ﻭﻻ ﻳﺰﻧﻮﻥ. ﻭﻣﻦ ﻳﻔﻌﻞ ﺫﻟﻚ ﻳﻠﻖ ﺃﺛﺎﻣﺎ. ﻳﻀﺎﻋﻒ ﻟﻪ ﺍﻟﻌﺬﺍﺏ ﻳﻮﻡ ﺍﻟﻘﻴﺎﻣﺔ ﻭﻳﺨﻠﺪ ﻓﻴﻪ ﻣﻬﺎﻧﺎ. ﺇﻻ ﻣﻦ ﺗﺎﺏ ﻭﺁﻣﻦ ﻭﻋﻤﻞ ﻋﻤﻼ ﺻﺎﻟﺤﺎ ﻓﺄﻭﻟﺌﻚ ﻳﺒﺪﻝ ﺍﻟﻠﻪ ﺳﻴﺌﺎﺗﻬﻢ ﺣﺴﻨﺎﺕ. ﻭﻛﺎﻥ ﺍﻟﻠﻪ ﻏﻔﻮﺭﺍ ﺭﺣﻴﻤﺎ.

9. Be diligent, my brother, in seeking night and day for the Lord's favor and say thus: "Good Father, bestow on me your favor even if I am not worthy." For by it, affection for all the passions vanishes from the soul: this it is which destroys the enemies and obtains all kinds of gifts from the bosom of the Father. Moreover, this favor is the mother who has brought forth the new mysteries of the New World; for by this favor Christ appears in you and the appearance of your soul shines in Him. Even now He makes you his abode with his Father and his Holy Spirit. Because the desire of Christ, O my brother, will vigorously uproot the desire of the world and its memories from the soul. And the soul will be attached to God alone. To Him be glory from all who love Him[19] and may he gladden us with his love. Amen.

[19] cf. Jn. 14:23.

9. ولذلك فإن الحكمة الكاملة هي الله وحده. وليس لأحد أن يدعي لنفسه شيئاً من ذلك. فإن الإنسان الذي يدعي لنفسه شيئاً من الحكمة يكون كمن يحاول أن يسرق مجد الله. وهذا ما فعله الشيطان عندما أراد أن يكون مثل العلي. فإن الله يقاوم المتكبرين ويعطي نعمة للمتواضعين. ولذلك فإن الإنسان الذي يدعي الحكمة لنفسه يكون كمن يحاول أن يسرق مجد الله. وهذا ما فعله الشيطان عندما أراد أن يكون مثل العلي. فإن الله يقاوم المتكبرين ويعطي نعمة للمتواضعين.

LETTER 5

To whoever hears and obeys, the peace of the Sanctifier!

1. O man of God, hear the words of your friend! No, beloved brother, let us not impose our will on Christ, but we must submit to his will. Do you wish that Christ appear to you in prayer as to his friend? May his love be in you without interruption. Do you desire that this love be constantly inflamed in your soul? Remove the love of the world from it. Do you yearn that your dwelling be in the Place without place, that is, in God? Go out from the world as from the womb.[1] And behold from that time you will see the true World, for Christ is not able to dwell with this world. I beg you, listen to Him when He declares to you: *I am not of this world*;[2] because of this, it chases me from where I dwell. And I am not able to live with it because *it abhors me*.[3] But He continually overshadows[4] the soul and visits it so that, if it be free from the world, He might dwell in it.

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[1] One is placed in this world awaiting the world to come and just as a fetus goes out from the womb, so the Christian emerges from the womb of this world into the life of the New World. The same image is found in Philoxenus of Mabbug, Homily 9. 260–269, esp. 262: "And when (the child of man who is born through Baptism)…hath increased and hath grown to the full, according to the measure of his unformed substance in the world, as in the womb, he becometh born again from the world, outside the world, in the same manner as the child is born again from the womb into the world." English translation of Philoxenus as found in *The Discourses of Philoxenus, Bishop of Mabbôgh, A.D. 485–519*, trans. and ed. E. A. Wallis Budge (London, 1893–94) 2 vols. Also John the Solitary uses the image, see Lavenant, *Jean d'Apamée*, 31. Finally Nicholas Cabasilas makes it an important component of his work, see *Nicholas Cabasilas, My Life in Christ*, trans. Margaret Lisney (Worthing, West Sussex: Churchman Publishing, 1989), 4.

[2] Jn. 8:23; 17:14–16.

[3] cf. Jn. 7:7; 15:18.

[4] Overshadows (*aggen*) has its roots in Jewish Aramaic and in the Peshitta. It is also found in many Syriac anaphoras. From its use in the Annunciation narrative, Luke 1:35, one sees that within the Syriac tradition it is a term for divine activity of a salvific nature. See S. P. Brock, "Passover, Annunciation and Epiclesis: Some Remarks on the Term *aggen* in the Syriac Versions of Lk 1:35," *Novum Testamentum* 24 (1982): 224–233. For the use of *aggen* in later spiritual writers, see Letter 13.

وبكه وسعد.حفظ معلمه معفيحه وصلوا وحمدوا؛

1. آه حزنا والكوا لعنه آه. نصر وحقد معه الكوا لعنه آه: لحصن سا لا. نصر وحقد معه الكوا لعنه آه: لحز. معجزه فحملوا سر الا سر نفحوا معجزه. لحز لا نجز لحفظ لزجز. لحز. معجزه فحملوا سر الا سر نفحوا معجزه:

2. Do you desire to see reflections of the beauty of the Holy Trinity in your soul? Keep the commandments of Christ. For He says that: "When you keep my commandments, my love is found in you."[5] And at their fulfillment[6] in the soul He says that He will come and make an abode with his Father and his Spirit[7] and there He will dwell and show Himself.[8] Also of his friends He says that they are not of this world and that the world hates them[9]. Because the fulfillment of the commandments is the Cross, that is, ignorance and forgetfulness of the world's pleasure,[10] and eager longings and earnest desire for departure in the heat of love, as with St. Paul.[11] With confidence towards my God, as one who trusts, I say indeed that when the mind strips off the world, it puts on Christ; with its turning away from concern for the world's affairs, it meets God; with the soul's cutting off its worldly habits, the Spirit chants its ineffable mysteries in it. This is a terrible mystery for me, but for the faithful it is revealed truth. O pupils of the eyes, if you provide irrigation, streams will overflow with their abundance![12] For what would we exchange this? Woe is me! Woe is me!

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[5] Jn. 14:15.

[6] Fulfillment (*šumlâyâ*).

[7] cf. Jn. 14:23.

[8] cf. Jn. 14:21.

[9] Jn. 17:14.

[10] 1 Jn. 2.17.

[11] Ph. 1:23.

[12] Tears: see Beulay, ES, 201–205, on both tears of repentance and tears of joy and wonder. He compares John of Dalyatha with John the Solitary's precise defining of when tears come, i.e., during the stage of Limpidity and not that successive one of Perfection. See Joseph Hazzaya's Letter 49.8 in the Appendix to this volume. Discourse 18 in the Book of Steps is "On the Tears of Prayers," see *The Book of Steps: The Syriac Liber Graduum*, trans. Robert Kitchen and Maartien F. G. Parmentier (CS 196, 2004). Isaac often speaks of tears, on their abundance and on the gift of tears. See Brock, *Isaac of Nineveh*, ch. 14.46. See also G. Panicker, "Prayer with Tears: A Great Feast of Repentance," *Harp* 4 (1991): 111–133. Tears are important to Abba Isaiah as well, as can be seen throughout his discourses, see *Abba Isaiah of Scetis, Ascetic Discourses*, trans. John Chryssavgis and P. Penkett (CS 150, 2002).

2. ولما كان الملك يعلم بسر الحب الذي
كان بين ابنه وبين ابنة الوزير، فقد
أرسل في طلب الوزير وقال له: إني
أعلم أن ابنتك تحب ابني، وأنا أعلم
أن ابني يحب ابنتك، وأنا أريد أن
أزوج ابني من ابنتك. فقال الوزير:
إن ابنتي لا تصلح لابنك، لأنها فقيرة
وهو غني، وهي لا تستطيع أن تعيش
في القصر الذي يعيش فيه ابنك.
فقال الملك: إني أريد أن أزوج ابني
من ابنتك، لأنها تحبه وهو يحبها.
فقال الوزير: إن ابنتي لا تحب ابنك،
وإنها تكرهه وتبغضه. فقال الملك:
إني أعلم أن ابنتك تحب ابني، وأنا
أريد أن أزوج ابني من ابنتك. فقال
الوزير: إن ابنتي لا تحب ابنك،
وإنها تكرهه وتبغضه. فقال الملك:
إني أعلم أن ابنتك تحب ابني، وأنا
أريد أن أزوج ابني من ابنتك. فقال
الوزير: إن ابنتي لا تحب ابنك،
وإنها تكرهه وتبغضه. فقال الملك:
إني أعلم أن ابنتك تحب ابني، وأنا
أريد أن أزوج ابني من ابنتك. فقال
الوزير: إن ابنتي لا تحب ابنك،
وإنها تكرهه وتبغضه. فقال الملك:

3. O Christ, whose pure blood has paid the debt which our foolish will owed, open the eyes of our minds that we may know where we are proceeding. May your light, which like the sun enlightens the legions of your Holiness, bring me unto You. May your Spirit, my Lord, place me among them even here below and in the world of light. And may your Spirit teach me their language so as to extol with them inaudible praise of You. Create me, my Lord,[13] as a new creature resembling your beauty and may we forget and disregard our previous nature.
4. Glory to the abundance of your ineffable love! Your door is open, my Lord, and there is no one who enters. Your glory is manifest and there is no one who contemplates it. Your light shines in the pupils of the eyes and we do not want to see. Your right hand is stretched out to give and there is no one who takes. You entice with compliments and we do not obey. You frighten us with terrors mixed with tenderness and we do not flee to You. O our good God, have pity on our wretchedness! Our sweet Creator, bind up our brokenness! Our Father full of mercy, You Yourself persuade and compel us and draw us near to You; because of ourselves we are unwilling to beseech You. *Lead out our soul from the prison*[14] in which we have imprisoned ourselves to your true light, even when we are not willing. May your power, my Lord, prevail over us and draw us from the drowning for which we are headed! Remove, my Lord, from before our sight all the veils with which the view of our soul is obscured from seeing your true light. In this light let us always stand stripped without interruption, with unveiled faces, and let us persist in the desire and in the delight of its beauty, forever and ever. Amen.

[13] Christ as Creator, from *berâ*: on Christ as creator in Ephrem, see Aho Shemunkasho, "The Healing of Interior and Exterior Blindness in Ephrem," *Studia Patristica* 35 (2001): 495–501. For Ephrem, "God is the source of healing and He sent His Son into the world to heal humanity and fulfil what was lacking in nature. The fulfiling and healing of the world is considered by Ephrem as a second creation." See A. Shemunkasho, *Healing in the Theology of St. Ephrem* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2002), 381–387; 407–421.

[14] Ps. 142:7.

3. ؛ابا ەەمح اللھ حبح تبث ەلحەن ىنمۇ لسمھ.
ةەەن ەەۋ ۋەەن. ىنىۋ ابا للا ىنبۇ حمھ ىتت ىلھ
ھمھمھ لحلح ىتحت ەۋ ؛ھۋۋەھ ىقىلحلح للاسمھمھ.
ۋلحلح ابھح ىتحتت ەۋ ؛ھۋۋەھ ىقىلحلح للاسمھمھ.
.ابۋەن ھحتحھ ابۋەن اھ ؛ھەەللحبھ ىتحزىن ىنمۇ لسمۋ.
لسحھھ ھەەمھ ىح للھمھ ھەەتبۋ ابمھھ ىتھحلىن
.ۋمنۋھھحھ لىتبۋمھ للا للا ىنبۇ ىنمۇ ىتبۇ. ابتحمھ
؛ابمۋھ ىتحتھ ابحلىن ابلاىن

4. ھەۋ ىتلھ. ھللتحلاھ للا ۋلاھمنۋ ابمحھحھھ لسحھھ
.ۋابمۋ للحھ لسحھھ للا. للابخۋ للحھ ىحزاۋ ىنمۇ
لسمھ لاھھھ ابسمھ. ابمھھ ىحزۋ للا للتحتت ۋەەن ىتبۋ
للا للاۋتھھھ للا ىنجىم. ىحھنۋ للحھ للاھھ
للا ابمبۋتت ىتجتمھ ابۋتھھھ للا للنۋمھ. ىحھتھلاھھ
ھەۋنۋ ىحمنۋ ىحلحلح. ۋلحلح ىحمنۋ ابھح ھەۋ ابھح
ىح للا ؛ابھھمنۋ للاھ ىحاۋ. ىنۋا تھۋح ابھھمھ
.ىحزۋ لا ۋھتھتۋ ىتمۋ ؛ۋلحلح ىحتنۋھ ىجۋھ ؛ھتھا
ۋەەمحلح ؛ىھھتھ ىح ىتمۋ ابھھمحھ للح ھح ھھھ ھھا
ابنھ للا ىح لا ىح اھ ابنھ. ىحزۋ لا ىح اھ ابنھ
ابنھ للا ىح ؛ۋلاھ ھۋ ھۋ ىتمۋ للا. ىحتمۋ ىحلح ابحھھلا
.ابنھ ۋەەن ابھحلح ىح ؛ابھتنھللاھ ىھھتۋ ھلاھ ىھھحۋ.
.للتىح لاقا. حاقا للا ھھھ. ىتمحھ للاھ ىنجىم ھحھ ىھھتۋ.
ىھھحح ىححح ەنۋەھۋ ابھھھححھ ەللىنجىم ىلحنۋ
.ىحھا

LETTER 6

[On oaths]

1. Father, give a command to the brothers that they not foolishly swear by the name of God in every utterance, nor even mention his name in any oath at all. The use of "yes" or "no" is sufficient.[1] What a great evil this is, which makes us strangers to God and unrecognized by Him. Cursed be he who swears falsely by the name of the Lord[2] because he is not his, but truly his enemy as He Himself has shown me and compelled me to indicate to you. Truly in this vision, *my flesh cleaved to my bones by reason of my groanings*.[3] On this account He has ordained: "I will not give my grace to the soul who does not fear my glorious name nor revere it, but uses it contemptuously."
2. You then, friend of his Lord, be zealous for his name which is blasphemed by the mouth of foolish ones with no understanding. Rebuke anyone who uses it in your presence and put him to shame. Let it not be a little thing in your eyes and do not find fault with these lines. The Lord has showed this to us that we might teach it to you. And every time that I remember the vision, my heart is stirred by its rebuke, as the Lord lives! Blessed is the one who hears and retains this! Blessed also the friend of the Beloved if indeed his hearing has not accepted this common talk from the mouth of the insolent ones!

[1] cf. Matt. 5:37.
[2] cf. Ex. 20:7; Lev. 19:12.
[3] Ps. 102:5.

٥

وهو الذي خلق السماوات والأرض في ستة أيام وكان عرشه على الماء ليبلوكم أيكم أحسن عملا ولئن قلت إنكم مبعوثون من بعد الموت ليقولن الذين كفروا إن هذا إلا سحر مبين.

1. وقال الملأ من قومه إنا لنراه في سفاهة وإنا لنظنه من الكاذبين. قال يا قوم ليس بي سفاهة ولكني رسول من رب العالمين. أبلغكم رسالات ربي وأنا لكم ناصح أمين. أوعجبتم أن جاءكم ذكر من ربكم على رجل منكم لينذركم ولتتقوا ولعلكم ترحمون. فكذبوه فأنجيناه والذين معه برحمة منا وقطعنا دابر الذين كذبوا بآياتنا وما كانوا مؤمنين.
2. وإلى ثمود أخاهم صالحا قال يا قوم اعبدوا الله ما لكم من إله غيره قد جاءتكم بينة من ربكم هذه ناقة الله لكم آية فذروها تأكل في أرض الله ولا تمسوها بسوء فيأخذكم عذاب أليم. واذكروا إذ جعلكم خلفاء من بعد عاد وبوأكم في الأرض تتخذون من سهولها قصورا وتنحتون الجبال بيوتا فاذكروا آلاء الله ولا تعثوا في الأرض مفسدين. قال الملأ الذين استكبروا من قومه للذين استضعفوا لمن آمن منهم أتعلمون أن صالحا مرسل من ربه قالوا إنا بما أرسل به مؤمنون. قال الذين استكبروا إنا بالذي آمنتم به كافرون. فعقروا الناقة وعتوا عن أمر ربهم وقالوا يا صالح ائتنا بما تعدنا إن كنت من المرسلين.

LETTER 7

[Of the Saint]

1. From henceforth I will cease from words. One thing has transfigured everything: that One in whose stead nothing is able to satisfy. Understand, my brother, this mystery which is the life of the heavenly beings and ours as theirs in eternity. Let us be tormented by love of the Beautiful One: this is the goal of all our labor. Blessed are they who are inebriated with your love, O my God: by means of their inebriation[1] in You, they are seized with folly and they disregard their previous needs.
2. Taste and see, my brother, the sweetness of our good Father,[2] how pleasing He is! But to those who have not experienced it, words will never make it known to them. He who is Himself sweetness, sweetens and satiates with Himself those who love Him. He rejoices in Himself and makes them glad in Him. He is Himself the beauty of his Being and He transfigures them into the image of his beauty by his revelation within them. He is Himself their wedding feast and their joyful bridal chamber: seeing Him in themselves, they greatly rejoice. He appears in them from within themselves and amazes them with his beauty.
3. Blessed is the soul that knows itself to be a mirror,[3] and gazing intently on it sees the brightness of the One who is hidden from all. He who said on the mountain: *No one may see me and live*,[4] is seen in this place. And those who see Him live forever. O our God, what love is yours that those who have tasted its great sweetness become enemies of all pleasure.

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[1] Inebriation in God (*rawwâyûtâ*), see analysis by H. Alfeyev, *Spiritual World of Isaac*, 248–256.

[2] Ps. 34:8.

[3] Mirror (*mahzîtâ*): in a very beautiful passage Shemʿon the Graceful (late 7th cent.) says that it is the hidden power of the Holy Spirit which dwells and works in the mirror. See *Simone di Taibuteh, Violenza e Grazia: la Coltura del Cuore*, trans. Paolo Bettiolo (Rome: Città Nuova, 1992), 115–116. See also Letter 14 for further discussion of mirror.

[4] Ex. 33:20.

١

وهب: محمد بكره بعيبه.

1. محمد انا من الله قلا عله. بم سكب حل لا هوا حب. هو
الله: وانا سبا الحلهما. لهذا وسجا لا الا حمدهكبه
حبزه. لا الحكتا حتكبه وحبه هوه تسا بتحد حكبه.
حكبه الحا لمعما هذه: لهعه لمعنبه لهوا لمتعما
الحلهمه: بحب وحبه لحبه حبوكب حمدهما
الحلهما: وحب: لهسعه بعسلهما حكله: لهسعه لمعا لهوزا
لهسعبه الحلهسعب حكله.

2. لهسا لمعا لحل حمل هلحكب بعبه: سبا محل
للحكب بم حمدكه لا حمد لله مه: حكمه لا هنعبه
لهلمه لا حمد لله مه: حكمه لا جمكه لا هنعبه بم حكب
لهلحل. هو لحبلمه لهذه حه حمدهنبته: لهمعما حه هوه
لهحمه. لهنبه حه حمدكه: لهنا حه هو لهحكبه
لهحمه بعبه. لهنبه حه حمدكه: لهنا حه هو لهحكبه
حكسفه هسحبهو لهمعبه حمدكه: لهلحبه
لهسلم حمدلهلمه بعبه. حمدو هسكب
لهسلم حمدلهلمه بعبه. حمدو هسكب
حكب مه سنو. لهزهه حمد حه لهنا. حمدلهبه
لهمه حمد حمدكه لهلمه حمد حمدكه.

3. محل هزا وحه. لحبا لهسعه هنه بهو لهعمك هنحل
لهنا لها الا. نعا لهلحكبه هو. حل مه لهجو هبه لهنبه
لهنا لها الا. نعا لهلحكبه هو. حل مه لهجو هبه لهنبه
حكب منسا: حلهلا لها لهلمه. لهحكمكه لهنا حكب
لهلحكب لهحو همحل حكبا: حمل لحبوكب لا
لهلحكب لهحو همحل حكبا: حمل لحبوكب لا
هبه هتلا لحكل حمهمه.

LETTER 8

[Concerning those who assemble in groups and appoint for themselves superiors and directors and oppose one another]

1. Beware, my brother, of those who lose their souls and the souls of their brothers, being anxious about affairs and the appointing of superiors. For they have fallen from the service of God into a stubborn and weary willfulness. And they want to make many friends for themselves who are on their side. They are subject to Satan who troubles the peaceful ones. But if they greatly annoy you, answer them with submission and reliance on your Lord: "I have gone out from the world to set aright my soul's condemnation, not to correct others. My habitation is my cell. And my assembly is the gathering together of my thoughts and my passions. Concerning this it is right for me to be made superior, ruling well the inhabitants of my house. And then I will take care of others: those whom the Shepherd of all would command me to watch over while remaining a stranger to the others." And if they become angry with this, God will not be angry—He will be very pleased with it.
2. The envious one does not see the light, for in his envy he finds fault with the luminous ones. The one who murmurs is constantly at enmity with God. The one who exalts himself is brought down to Sheol. The one who humbles himself becomes like his Lord. The one who loves being solicitous is a worker of the devil of fornication. He who loves contact with worldlings is an enemy of God. He who loves the saints is a companion of the angels.
3. Strengthen your soul, you who are negligent like me. Yet a little while and the evening will come when we will sleep and take rest from our labor:[1] then we will arise at the dawn of rejoicing.[2]

[1] cf. Ps. 4:8.

[2] cf. Ps. 30:5.

٣

وبعد: فإن الله سبحانه وتعالى خلق الإنسان وكرّمه، وميّزه بالعقل والإرادة، وجعل له حرية الاختيار بين الخير والشر، وبين الطاعة والمعصية. وقد أرسل الله الرسل وأنزل الكتب لتكون هداية للناس ورحمة لهم، ولتقيم عليهم الحجة، ولتبيّن لهم طريق السعادة في الدنيا والآخرة.

1. إن الإيمان بالله تعالى ليس مجرد كلمة تُقال باللسان، بل هو عقيدة راسخة في القلب، وعمل صالح يظهر على الجوارح، وخلق كريم يتجلى في السلوك والمعاملة. فالمؤمن الحق هو الذي يعبد الله كأنه يراه، فإن لم يكن يراه فإن الله يراه، ويعلم سره ونجواه، ويطلع على خفايا نفسه وخواطر قلبه. وهذا المعنى العظيم هو الذي يربّي في النفس المراقبة الدائمة لله، ويحملها على الإخلاص في القول والعمل، وعلى الصدق في النية والقصد، وعلى الأمانة في الأداء والتعامل، وعلى الرحمة بالخلق والإحسان إليهم.
2. ومن أعظم ما يدل على عظمة هذا الدين أنه لم يترك الإنسان في حيرة من أمره، ولم يتركه يتخبط في ظلمات الجهل والهوى، بل بيّن له الطريق الواضح، وأوضح له المنهج القويم، وحذّره من الطرق المهلكة والمسالك الوعرة. وقد جاء القرآن الكريم والسنة النبوية الشريفة بكل ما يحتاج إليه الفرد والمجتمع في جميع شؤون الحياة، من العبادات والمعاملات، والأخلاق والآداب، والسياسة والاقتصاد، والعلاقات الأسرية والاجتماعية، وغير ذلك من مجالات الحياة المختلفة.
3. ولقد كان من أعظم ما امتاز به هذا الدين أنه جمع بين الروح والمادة، وبين الدنيا والآخرة، فلم يهمل جانبًا على حساب جانب، ولم يغلُ في أمر على حساب آخر، بل أقام الحياة على التوازن والاعتدال، وأمر المسلم أن يعمل لدنياه كأنه يعيش أبدًا، وأن يعمل لآخرته كأنه يموت غدًا.

LETTER 9

[Of the saint to one of his friends, a great Elder]

1. We cannot see each other's face without the assistance of created light. Likewise we cannot see the true inwardness of our souls, nor rejoice in the mysteries which are in them without the assistance of the creating Light. Therefore I am amazed at your inalterable love, for while you have never seen the rays of life in my soul, you embrace it with what stirs constantly in your soul. And you mix its earnest desire with the longing which is stirred in your heart. And you remove all the other movements that they may not dwell with it. But may Our Lord requite you for your love towards me by his revelation in your soul: He who is true love.

٤

الصلاة على النبي

1. الحمد لله الذي أنزل على عبده الكتاب ولم يجعل له عوجا. الحمد لله الذي أسرى بعبده ليلا من المسجد الحرام إلى المسجد الأقصى. الحمد لله الذي أنزل الفرقان على عبده ليكون للعالمين نذيرا. الحمد لله الذي له ملك السموات والأرض ولم يتخذ ولدا ولم يكن له شريك في الملك وخلق كل شيء فقدره تقديرا. الحمد لله الذي أنزل على عبده الكتاب ولم يجعل له عوجا.

LETTER 10

[Of the saint from the letters sent to his brother[1]]

1. I learned about your condition and I praised Our Lord for your healing in God. But I am ashamed of being destitute of all virtue. All I do is eat, sleep, drink, and be negligent. Anyone who rejects care for himself must expect death. But someone has said that sometimes while walking on the road or standing by the side of it, at this time he begins to be absorbed.[2] Suddenly he is speechless by the operation of the omnipotent Power and he forgets himself and all that is his, while being amazed and astonished at the beauty by which he has been drawn. Who understands, let him understand! And everyone who does not understand, may Our Lord grant him to grasp it. But I am not able to depict with images the Fashioner of all. Nor have I power with lines of ink to tell of the creative Beauty.[3] Woe to me when our services are found deficient towards the Lord of all! A double woe on ourselves when all our affairs come to an end for not having served the Master of the house! But let us be still and amazed so as to find Him of whom only stillness is able to speak.
2. Pray for me, for Our Lord's sake, for his place is within you: may you draw us to enter Him, while we will beseech Him with desire to come forth to us to show Himself. He will kindle his fire in our soul and make manifest his activity in it, if He finds it free from the dankness of material passions.

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[1] According to Chabot, John had two brothers who were monks, Sergius and Theodorus. See Chabot, '*Livre de la chasteté*', # 126.

[2] John is probably speaking about himself here, in an indirect way, concerning his own personal experiences. He often uses a similar discretion in speaking about his prayer life.

[3] Creative Beauty (*śuprâ bârwyâ*).

ب

وجهه: أعلم بما يعلمه من حكمه وقدره.

1. يخبر تعالى عن المشركين: أنهم لما عبدوا من لا يخلق شيئًا وهم يخلقون، ولا يملك لهم ضرًا ولا نفعًا، ولا يملك موتًا ولا حياة ولا نشورًا، أنه لا حجة لهم في ذلك، ولا مستند لهم فيه، بل هو باطل وضلال، وكفر ومحال. ثم أخبر أنه لا يستجيب لهم، أي: لا يجيب دعاءهم، ولو دعوه دهرًا طويلًا، وأزمانًا متطاولة، فإنه لا يسمع دعاءهم، لأنهم لا يعقلون ما يقال لهم، ولا يفهمون الخطاب، ولو سمعوا على سبيل الفرض والتقدير، لما استجابوا لهم، لأنهم لا يملكون لهم شيئًا، ولا يقدرون على ذلك، ولهذا قال: ﴿وَيَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ يَكْفُرُونَ بِشِرْكِكُمْ﴾ أي: يتبرأ بعضهم من بعض، ويلعن بعضهم بعضًا، كما قال تعالى: ﴿إِذْ تَبَرَّأَ الَّذِينَ اتُّبِعُوا مِنَ الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوا وَرَأَوُا الْعَذَابَ وَتَقَطَّعَتْ بِهِمُ الْأَسْبَابُ﴾ [البقرة: 166]، وقال: ﴿كَلَّا سَيَكْفُرُونَ بِعِبَادَتِهِمْ وَيَكُونُونَ عَلَيْهِمْ ضِدًّا﴾ [مريم: 82]، وقال: ﴿ثُمَّ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ يَكْفُرُ بَعْضُكُم بِبَعْضٍ وَيَلْعَنُ بَعْضُكُم بَعْضًا﴾ [العنكبوت: 25]، وقال: ﴿كُلَّمَا دَخَلَتْ أُمَّةٌ لَّعَنَتْ أُخْتَهَا﴾ [الأعراف: 38]، وقال: ﴿وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوا لَوْ أَنَّ لَنَا كَرَّةً فَنَتَبَرَّأَ مِنْهُمْ كَمَا تَبَرَّءُوا مِنَّا﴾ [البقرة: 167]، وقال: ﴿وَإِذَا رَأَى الَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا شُرَكَاءَهُمْ قَالُوا رَبَّنَا هَؤُلَاءِ شُرَكَاؤُنَا الَّذِينَ كُنَّا نَدْعُو مِن دُونِكَ فَأَلْقَوْا إِلَيْهِمُ الْقَوْلَ إِنَّكُمْ لَكَاذِبُونَ﴾ [النحل: 86]، وقال: ﴿وَقَالَ إِنَّمَا اتَّخَذْتُم مِّن دُونِ اللَّهِ أَوْثَانًا مَّوَدَّةَ بَيْنِكُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا ثُمَّ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ يَكْفُرُ بَعْضُكُم بِبَعْضٍ وَيَلْعَنُ بَعْضُكُم بَعْضًا﴾ [العنكبوت: 25].

2. أي: لا أحد أضل ممن هذه صفته، فإن الأصنام لا تعقل ولا تسمع: ﴿وَإِذَا حُشِرَ النَّاسُ كَانُوا لَهُمْ أَعْدَاءً﴾ أي: يوم القيامة، ﴿وَكَانُوا بِعِبَادَتِهِمْ كَافِرِينَ﴾ أي: جاحدين لها، منكرين أن تكون عبادة، كما قال تعالى: ﴿وَاتَّخَذُوا مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ آلِهَةً لِّيَكُونُوا لَهُمْ عِزًّا﴾ [مريم: 81]، وقال: ﴿وَاتَّخَذُوا مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ آلِهَةً لَّعَلَّهُمْ يُنصَرُونَ﴾ [يس: 74]، وقال: ﴿وَاتَّخَذُوا مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ آلِهَةً لِّيَكُونَ لَهُمْ عِزًّا﴾ [مريم: 81]، وقال: ﴿وَاتَّخَذُوا مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ آلِهَةً لَّعَلَّهُمْ يُنصَرُونَ﴾ [يس: 74].

LETTER 11

1. Your grief-filled letter was an occasion of thanksgiving for us, and I call our misery blessed which was deemed worthy to drink the cup of the sufferings of our Savior; as I am convinced that from the bitter draught drunk for Him, things that are glorious will spring forth in which the diligent will rejoice, making them glorious in the glory of their Glorifier.
2. The athlete who looks at the crown is not disheartened by the intensity of the struggles. And the crown, with which Christ crowns the one who loves Him, at the end of his strife, is the vision of the Holy Trinity.[1] Blessed are you, O combatant, if you look on this goal and you do not turn back. If you are struck with arrows by your enemies, behold, your King observes your struggle and He Himself will heal your wounds. He will anoint you with sweet oil, the oil of joy,[2] and He will refresh your weary limbs which have been afflicted for his sake. Since the outer sun of your pupils has been darkened by the violence of the adversities, all at once you will receive in exchange the place whose sun is the Creator. And this sun will gladden your face with a light without shadow. The limbs which were dipped in the blood of their wounds for love of the Spouse more beautiful than all, even in this life they shine in the eternally existing glory which He gives them as a pledge.
3. No, my brother, let us not be deserters from the battle in the manner of those who are condemned to death by royal decree. But let us call on the Chief of our army to help us and He Himself will give us victory. Let us declare our weakness before Him, and He Himself will be the strength in our limbs. Let us be ever thirsty for his vision, and He will show us the beauty of his face.

[1] Evag., Cent. I:75.
[2] Ps. 45:7.

ما

.إتهمحبم

1. .الفق أمحه هم ملنكا ح أوه الهوملا الحج :الفق أمحه هم ملنكا ح أوه الهوملا الحج .مهزه بقب لهما الهمحه أوه لهمهجه لا حهن لحولم .ح مهم حتن :همقال الحج إنزه لالهمه مع لا هفم ح حتن لستمه همحه :إنمه مالة همج ستمه همحبه وهفصفه همحبه.

2. الحج .لحتم لمهه مه ولفلا لا .الحجح غلنه لهلحلا همه الله :همهلحا محمهه همنزج لسمه مه الفه وهذا لمهلحلا غمل لمه لهمه ل مصول .الهبم الهملحلا مه لهلحلا همحه لا فيلهحه .إتلهه مه لهاكم حجا لم .لمه لا فيلهحه مح مهزه هلقهه لهلم هه هجه .مجزه لمهه مجه لتلا فقهم سبهه :الهبه هم لمهم :لمهههجه لمهجه همحه لا فيلهحه لنج لمهه مهبهم .همال الحج هفيلالم مهمهم لالال لا لهمه لهجبه مح همه .الفق لمهه هجلهم لهمهم ل

4. All who for love of Him have deprived themselves, have received these things of his for their delight. All who have drunk absinthe and gall in the conflict with themselves, to change their will into the will of their Creator, thereby become guests in the house of the Father. As the seer said: "Christ is their table, from which they are sustained by the Father."[3] Since their food became spoiled in their mouths from tears and sighs, now they consume God with great heartfelt rejoicing. And because in the drunkenness of his love they have despised fetid desire, the beauty of his vision more desirable than all truly appears in them, and wicked desire quickly fades away.
5. A certain trustworthy brother said to me—let no one doubt this—that when the foul desire of fornication was burning, he would call out constantly to God while saying: "My good God, give me bodily death lest I die to the life which is in You! My Lord, I am not fit for combat, but as one who is weak without strength for war or strife, take passion and combat from me." And he affirmed: "From that time when my Creator was pleased to visit me, I take great care to keep from meeting women and from remembrance of them. For whenever I meet them or their memory comes to mind, my insides are upset and my belly aches so that I am hardly able to take nourishment that day, from the remembrance of this foulness. And in their presence I am not able to eat anything at all, my body being shaken and losing its composure from the strong smell." He also said: "Even from meeting males who are still young, my brain is confused by their foul odor." Thus what captivates the dissolute, God made hateful in his eyes.

[3] Evag., Cent. II:60.

4. ولا يجوز أن يكون الله تعالى علة لوجود العالم، لأن الله تعالى إنما يكون علة لوجود العالم بالإرادة، ولا يجوز أن يكون الله تعالى مريدًا لوجود العالم، لأن الله تعالى لو كان مريدًا لوجود العالم لكان وجود العالم قبل وجوده، وهذا محال. وإنما قلنا إن الله تعالى لو كان مريدًا لوجود العالم لكان وجود العالم قبل وجوده، لأن الله تعالى لو كان مريدًا لوجود العالم لكان وجود العالم بإرادة الله تعالى، وإرادة الله تعالى قديمة، والقديم لا يتأخر عن القديم، فوجود العالم بإرادة الله تعالى لا يتأخر عن الله تعالى، فوجود العالم لا يتأخر عن الله تعالى، فوجود العالم قبل وجوده، وهذا محال.

5. وإنما قلنا إن الله تعالى ليس بمريد لأن المريد لا يخلو إما أن يكون مريدًا لنفسه، أو لغيره، أو لا لنفسه ولا لغيره. والأول باطل، لأن المريد لنفسه لا يكون مريدًا لنفسه إلا إذا كان مريدًا لإرادته لنفسه، وإرادته لنفسه لا تكون إلا إذا كان مريدًا لإرادته لإرادته لنفسه، وهذا يؤدي إلى التسلسل في الإرادات، وهو محال. والثاني باطل، لأن المريد لغيره لا يكون مريدًا لغيره إلا إذا كان مريدًا لإرادته لغيره، وإرادته لغيره لا تكون إلا إذا كان مريدًا لإرادته لإرادته لغيره، وهذا يؤدي إلى التسلسل في الإرادات، وهو محال. والثالث باطل، لأن المريد لا لنفسه ولا لغيره لا يكون مريدًا أصلًا، لأن الإرادة صفة زائدة على الذات، والذات لا تكون مريدة إلا بإرادة زائدة على الذات، وهذا محال.

6. Those who have no distinct taste of food on account of the intensity of the combat, their soul is anointed by the sweetness of the Creator.[4] Their bones are moistened by him and he is also the breath delighting them with the triune Power. All who have tasted these things are not disheartened by the many temptations; and all who wish to taste them should not be discouraged for, behold, hope strengthens them. For shortly the Sun of joys will shine forth within them and they will no longer remember these things[5] which afflicted them at the time of trial. However intense these sad things, all the greater will be these pleasant things. So then, brothers, let us not be discouraged by our afflictions, for truly we are not abandoned beyond our strength.[6] The Good One is faithful.[7] To Him be glory forever and ever. Amen.

[4] Ps. 63:5.
[5] cf. Is. 65:17.
[6] cf. 1 Cor. 10:13.
[7] Ibid.

6. ابحر ولا فيه لا بحرا. اه :احتوى اهمه من الاكحاله، اهحل هفيه لا بحرا
هه هحلهزاه. امهز امحسحا ههههه بهوا، ههحه
الله، اهمهخه امهه هههه هحه هوه اه. ههههتي
الاهه ههه احلهلهه لا هحه. لا هلهله هحهه حلا. احلها
بهههه. هحلهلا لا. همجلهه حبز، حلا. ابهه اهذه اها.
حسهحهه. هحه الاهه، اهمه سه حلحا هحه. ههههه هحي الاهه، اهمه سه حلحا هحه. ههههه
ابهههه، احبر هفيلا ههه، بحه بيهولا لا حاله.
بحه لتهي حها :تههه، بحه، اهمه امحه
الها، :تبا بيكاه حلفا لا هبه. هحبق،
هه، احلا ها همهه. بحه مه هذ بحه همحلهبه
ه اها بحهه بحبه اسهه

LETTER 12

[On prayer]

1. The monk who continues to pray to God by means of stirrings still stays beneath the level of perfection. But you say: "Do not blaspheme, brother, our Fathers extolled this prayer more than all other labors." I also am one of those who praise it and I ask my God that I might spend the rest of my life at it. I know that it is great and that it is exalted, more exalted than all other works since it wears itself out giving rest to the weary and when they have been refreshed sees that they not become weary again.
2. Understand, my brother, Our Lord said to Simon, chief of the Apostles: *I will give you the keys of the Kingdom of heaven*, that you may close and open to all whom you wish.[1] And not only to Simon did he give this power, but also to all lovers of the Truth. Now prayer consists in knocking at the door of the Giver; but the one who has entered the Kingdom and has taken possession of its treasures, how can he knock at the door? So then, what to do? He enjoys the good things within and he is amazed and marvels at the beauty of the Good One. But it would be absurd to say that he is actually praying, for he is utterly inebriated with the beauty of the most glorious Bridegroom.

[1] Matt. 16:19.

ح

الحرب الحق: الشجاعة والتضحية.

1. الحمد لله الذي وفق من شاء من عباده لنصرة دينه وإعلاء كلمته، وجعل ذلك من أعظم القربات وأجل الطاعات. والصلاة والسلام على نبينا محمد الذي بعثه الله بالحق بشيرًا ونذيرًا، وداعيًا إلى الله بإذنه وسراجًا منيرًا. أما بعد:
2. فإن الحرب في الإسلام ليست غاية في ذاتها، ولا مغنمًا يُطلب لذاته، وإنما هي وسيلة لغاية أسمى وهدف أعلى، وهو إقامة دين الله في الأرض، ورفع الظلم عن المستضعفين، وحماية الأمة من عدوان المعتدين. وقد شرع الله الجهاد في سبيله بعد أن ضاقت بالمسلمين سبل الدعوة، وآذاهم المشركون في دينهم وأنفسهم، فأذن لهم بالقتال بعد أن كان ممنوعًا عنهم، فقال تعالى: ﴿أُذِنَ لِلَّذِينَ يُقَاتَلُونَ بِأَنَّهُمْ ظُلِمُوا وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ نَصْرِهِمْ لَقَدِيرٌ﴾.

3. As Evagrius says: "Prayer is purity of the intellect, such that the stirrings of its prayer are not cut short except by the rising of the holy light of the Trinity over the intellect."[2] For he says that through wonder at the light, prayer is interrupted. Therefore perfection is wonder caused by God, as we have said, and not from the continued stirrings of prayer. The one who has entered the place of the mysteries, dwells in the wonder which is in them and this is the true prayer which opens the door of God's treasures to give to suppliants what meets their needs. *Freely you have received, also give freely*[3] to all whom you wish. Of these who have power over riches, even to give as of their own to all whom they please, how can one dare to say that they knock at the door like beggars asking alms to meet their needs? Indeed not! But they distribute sustenance, raise the dead, convey hope, give light to the blind.[4] *You are*, it is said, *the light of the world*.[5] And: *I will give you the keys*.[6] You then are no longer as one seeking; what is yours you possess, since you have the power to bind and to loose in this age and forever. How can such a one prostrate at the door to beg like a wayfarer, while in his hands are the keys of the treasury, to take from and to give; to live and to give life?

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[2] This quote of Evagrius is also found in Isaac. See S. P. Brock, *The Syriac Fathers on Prayer and the Spiritual Life* (CS 101, 1987), 262 and 300, note 12. Both Isaac and John use a mistranslation of the Greek of Evagrius: "cut short" instead of "occur." The discussion of the limits of prayer in Isaac has led I. Hausherr to perhaps overestimate the influence of Evagrius whereas Khalifé-Hachem stresses a dependence on John the Solitary. See É. Khalifé-Hachem, "La prière pure et la prière spirituelle selon Isaac de Ninive," in *Mémorial Mgr. G. Khouri-Sarkis*, ed. F. Graffin (Louvain, 1969), 169–172. He makes the case for Isaac, but there are many similarities between Isaac and John concerning pure prayer.

[3] Matt. 10:8.

[4] Those who are united to Christ have these powers of his to "distribute sustenance, raise the dead, convey hope, give light to the blind." John sees this as humanity's being associated with divine compassion and actually able to grant the prayers of others, in fact "his mercy is poured out over all like God's." Found in Discourse 23, "On the charity and the love of God," H.27b, col. 2. For other examples of this in the Discourses and in Joseph Hazzaya, see Beulay, ES, 485–87.

[5] Matt. 5:14.

[6] Matt. 16:19.

3. لا خلاص لحقارة في. نعم العبد إنما خلق العبد
للعبادة. إلا ما بسببها مع بعبادة سيده فخلف
العبد العابد لعبادته أفضل من. نعم إنما خلق
العبد للعبادة أفضل من الجاهد. لا نعم
أن يكون العبد مجاهدا. فإنما خلق العبد
لأجل الجهاد. فإذا جاء الأجل لم يجد
عند الله في الجهاد خلق العبد مجاهدا. فقد
خلق العبد لأجل ما هو خير له في الحقيقة من
الجهاد. فإنما هو عبد لله. فإنما خلق العبد
للعبادة. فإذا جاء الأجل لم يجد عند الله في
الجهاد خلق العبد مجاهدا. فإنما خلق العبد
لأجل ما هو خير له في الحقيقة من الجهاد.
فإنما هو عبد لله. فإنما خلق العبد للعبادة.
فإذا جاء الأجل لم يجد عند الله في الجهاد
خلق العبد مجاهدا. فإنما خلق العبد لأجل
ما هو خير له في الحقيقة من الجهاد. فإنما
هو عبد لله. فإنما خلق العبد للعبادة. فإذا
جاء الأجل لم يجد عند الله في الجهاد خلق
العبد مجاهدا. فإنما خلق العبد لأجل ما هو
خير له في الحقيقة من الجهاد. فإنما هو
عبد لله. فإنما خلق العبد للعبادة. فإذا جاء
الأجل لم يجد عند الله في الجهاد خلق العبد
مجاهدا. فإنما خلق العبد لأجل ما هو خير
له في الحقيقة من الجهاد. فإنما هو عبد

4. But you will say: Why *did Simon go up on the roof to pray*,[7] and why does the great Paul say: *Pray always*?[8] These Apostles, my brothers, use such things with us which, insofar as they are known to us, are ones which are suitable for us. And by these things they give us a type of the higher things, but not at all for themselves. Did you not hear that when Simon went on the roof, a stupor fell on him?[9] And how is the one who is speechless and astounded to pray truly? *It is the Spirit Himself who prays for us*, says St. Paul.[10] This then is the working of the Spirit and not the stirrings of prayer. As he said: *God has shone forth in our hearts*,[11] and *his Spirit searches His depths and reveals to us His mysteries*.[12] We may have wanted to make this prayer ourselves, but the Spirit of Jesus would not permit it because *we have the mind of Christ*[13] to see the mysteries of the house of the Father.
5. So then they have gone into the place of wonder. They have gained power in the world of visions; the Spirit has united them to the wondrous beauty; they no longer get weary in prayer; they no longer weep at the door; no longer do they cry from afar: "Show us your beauty!" They no longer ask like beggars: "Share with us your riches!" They give because they have received; they share because they have grown rich; they give rest because they are given rest in the harbor of life; they rejoice and they give joy because they are drunk with the love of the Beautiful One. *Streams of living waters flow from within him who believes in me*.[14] But why do they flow, Our Lord? Teach me! These waters give life to others and give drink to the thirsty.

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[7] Acts 10.9.
[8] 1 Thess. 5:17.
[9] cf. Acts 10:10.
[10] Rom. 8:26.
[11] 2 Cor. 4:6.
[12] 1 Cor. 2:10–12.
[13] 1 Cor. 2:16.
[14] Jn. 7:38.

4. الله أمن: لا يحل لنا أن نعلم علم ما لم يعلمنا إياه. ولا
نعلم: نتأنى حكمه. إلا أن يعلمنا: أي: فإذا هو علمنا
إياه: بتأويل حكمه. حتى: حتى يكون. حاكما: مستعلما
حكمه. ومن: حكمه أن جعل العلم حكما بين
عباده. ولا يجوز أن يعلم الله نبيه علما إلا
حكم به. وهذا: معنى قوله: ولا تعجل بالقرآن
من قبل أن يقضى إليك وحيه. وقوله: وقل رب
زدني علما. أي: فيما يحتاج إليه من أمر دينه
وأمر دنياه. وقوله: ولقد عهدنا إلى آدم من قبل
فنسي. أي: ترك ما أمر به. ولم نجد له عزما.
أي: صبرا على ما أمر به. ولا على ما نهي عنه.
وقوله: وإذ قلنا للملائكة اسجدوا لآدم فسجدوا
إلا إبليس. أبى أن يسجد. وكان من الكافرين.
أي: من العاصين. وقوله: فقلنا يا آدم إن هذا
عدو لك ولزوجك. أي: لإبليس عدو لك ولزوجك.
فلا يخرجنكما من الجنة فتشقى. أي: فتتعب في
طلب المعيشة. إن لك ألا تجوع فيها ولا تعرى.
وأنك لا تظمأ فيها ولا تضحى. أي: لا تبرز للشمس
فتجد حرها. فوسوس إليه الشيطان. أي: ألقى إليه
الوسوسة. قال يا آدم هل أدلك على شجرة الخلد
وملك لا يبلى. أي: لا يفنى. فأكلا منها فبدت لهما
سوآتهما. أي: عوراتهما. وطفقا يخصفان عليهما
من ورق الجنة.

6. How can he who has become one with Christ truly pray as one not acquainted with the Master of the house? And to whom does he pray, since he is a son of God? *Your Father who is in heaven knows what you need before you ask Him.*[15] Then why did Paul say: *Pray without growing weary*? [16]As long as he is a servant, he truly prays but when he is born of the Spirit into the world of prayer, then he is a son of God; he has dominion over riches as an heir, with no further need of beseeching.
7. Then prayer is greater than all labors: it has opened the door to the place of wonder, relieved weariness and silenced all stirrings. But perhaps you will say: "You speak of wonder but I do not know the power of this wonder." I offer as witness the word of a brother worthy of belief who says: "When the grace of my God is pleased with me and draws my intellect to astonishment at the vision of Him, my intellect remains all the day without stirrings in the place of wonder and when it goes out from there, it prays and earnestly entreats that the light of the concealed One, which is hidden within him, may shine out in the world full of wonder." From this time forward, it is no longer a place of words in which the pen is able to flow with ink; here a limit is set: silence. Only the mind is able to pass over and to see this resting-place of all the mysteries. The mind has power to go in and to marvel at the wonderful beauty which is above all and hidden within all.

[15] Matt. 6:8.
[16] Luke 18:1.

6. ولم أر الذي حكى السبعة عن ابن ذكوان وهي طريقي لم يذكر الذي حكى الصفراوي عن أبي الحسن الأخفش الذي حكى الوجهين عن ابن ذكوان. وهذا الذي حكى الصفراوي هو الذي حكى الداني عن الأخفش. وهذا الذي حكى الداني هو الذي حكى الشاطبي. وهذا الذي حكى الشاطبي هو الذي حكى المهدوي. وهذا الذي حكى المهدوي هو الذي حكى أبو العلاء الهمداني. وهذا الذي حكى الهمداني هو الذي حكى أبو الفضل الخزاعي. وهذا الذي حكى الخزاعي هو الذي حكى أبو العز القلانسي. وهذا الذي حكى القلانسي هو الذي حكى أبو الفتح فارس بن أحمد بن فارس. وهذا الذي حكى فارس هو الذي حكى أبو الطيب عبد المنعم بن غلبون. وهذا الذي حكى ابن غلبون هو الذي حكى أبو الحسن طاهر بن غلبون. وهذا الذي حكى طاهر هو الذي حكى أبو عبد الله الحسين بن خالويه. وهذا الذي حكى ابن خالويه هو الذي حكى أبو بكر محمد بن مجاهد. وهذا الذي حكى ابن مجاهد هو الذي حكى أبو بكر أحمد بن موسى بن العباس بن مجاهد. وهذا الذي حكى أبو بكر بن مجاهد هو الذي حكى أبو الحسن أحمد بن جبير الكوفي. وهذا الذي حكى أبو الحسن بن جبير هو الذي حكى أبو بكر أحمد بن محمد بن سليمان بن الأشعث. وهذا الذي حكى أبو بكر بن الأشعث هو الذي حكى أبو عبد الله محمد بن إسحاق بن خزيمة. وهذا الذي حكى ابن خزيمة هو الذي حكى أبو العباس الفضل بن شاذان. وهذا الذي حكى الفضل بن شاذان هو الذي حكى أبو عبد الله محمد بن عبد الله بن عبد الحكم. وهذا الذي حكى ابن عبد الحكم هو الذي حكى أبو عبد الله محمد بن إدريس الشافعي. وهذا الذي حكى الشافعي هو الذي حكى أبو عبد الله نافع بن أبي نعيم. وهذا الذي حكى نافع هو الذي حكى أبو جعفر يزيد بن القعقاع. وهذا الذي حكى أبو جعفر هو الذي حكى أبو رزين مسعود بن مالك. وهذا الذي حكى مسعود هو الذي حكى أبي بن كعب. وهذا الذي حكى أبي هو الذي حكى رسول الله ﷺ.

7. وهذه أسانيد. فكل من حكى عن الشخص ما الشيء فهو أولى بذلك الشيء من غيره. وكل من حكى عن أصحاب الأصل أولى من حكى عن أصحاب الفرع. وكل من حكى عن أصحاب الفرع أولى من حكى عن أصحاب أصحاب الفرع. وكل من حكى عن أصحاب أصحاب الفرع أولى من حكى عن أصحاب أصحاب أصحاب الفرع. وكل من حكى عن أصحاب أصحاب أصحاب الفرع أولى من حكى عن أصحاب أصحاب أصحاب أصحاب الفرع. وكل من حكى عن أصحاب أصحاب أصحاب أصحاب الفرع أولى من حكى عن أصحاب أصحاب أصحاب أصحاب أصحاب الفرع. وكل من حكى عن أصحاب أصحاب أصحاب أصحاب أصحاب أصحاب الفرع أولى من حكى عن أصحاب أصحاب أصحاب أصحاب أصحاب أصحاب أصحاب الفرع. وكل من حكى عن أصحاب أصحاب أصحاب أصحاب أصحاب أصحاب أصحاب أصحاب الفرع أولى من حكى عن أصحاب أصحاب أصحاب أصحاب أصحاب أصحاب أصحاب أصحاب أصحاب الفرع. وكل من حكى عن أصحاب أصحاب أصحاب أصحاب أصحاب أصحاب أصحاب أصحاب أصحاب أصحاب الفرع أولى من حكى عن أصحاب أصحاب أصحاب أصحاب أصحاب أصحاب أصحاب أصحاب أصحاب أصحاب أصحاب الفرع.

8. Thus every prayer which is not transformed now and then into wonder at the mysteries, has not yet arrived at perfection, as we have said above. Not even does the prayer of stirrings itself remain continually if it has never tasted the wonder caused by the joy of God.[17] Continual prayer is wonder before God. This sums up what we have said. Therefore to these things you will say: "Do not speak of things of which you are not capable; do not say what you have not experienced." Truly, I incline my head in shame, I am silent and I take refuge in mercy. Help me by prayer.

[17] cf. Neh. 8:10.

8. مرم حلا يحلا وهلحا لا ااتح وهلحا الحلا حلا مرم
احر: لا حرصلا مُحلا حمحمحلا مُحلا وامرم مر حلحلا.
الهصح اهمل ى: الهصلحاه حلقا وحلا وهلحا الحلا
اهمل. هملا الممل الحلا. مُحجل لا ححه حلا اهلحا
وحلحا. هره همحه وحلحا. مرحم لحا حلحم أمر حلحم
ام. لا لهمر مرحم ولا محفه ام. لا لهلا ولا نهصل.
لمحتحه: ام الهم ماحه مر مهر ام حرمُ ام ام
محلحلم ام. حرمس حرمُ.

LETTER 13

[On stillness and the avoidance of contacts]

1. Listen, my brother, and I will tell you a truth which I learned from my God. When you lovingly converse with seculars you are considered worldly by God. And when you are together in friendship with monks, the friends of God, you are a true monk. When cut off from all, and you meditate on God continually, you are divine and become like God. This is the sum of all our pursuits.
2. Sanctify your bed by the descent of the Spirit over you and the fragrance of your members will be wafted like perfume from the place of your reclining by the overshadowing[1] of the Most Holy One. It is He, my brother, the guardian of purity who guards those who love Him. Blessed is the monk who even in his sleep knows the holy powers and distinguishes the opposing ones. Woe to the monk the walls of whose cell are evil-smelling, because he is a lodger and not at home in his house. Woe to the monk the rags of whose body are not fragrant, for his tunic does not suit him.[2] Blessed is the monk who kisses the walls of his cell because of the sweet smell wafting from them; who, fallen prostrate on his face, inhales it and, bowed down on his knees, draws it out; who stands on his feet and burns in the heat; who embraces and kisses the cross[3] and glows in the beauty of the Most High; whose heart leaps for joy and cries out in rejoicing!

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[1] Overshadowing (*maggnânûtâ*) and its root *aggen* are used to describe the descent of the Holy Spirit on the Virgin Mary (Luke 1:35) and on the gifts during the Eucharistic epiclesis. In some later monastic writings, the noun is used as seen here to indicate the activity of the Holy Spirit upon the heart during prayer, thus revealing the scriptural and sacramental dimensions of a life of prayer. Isaac dedicates a whole chapter to it; see Brock, *Isaac of Nineveh,* ch. 16. See also S. P. Brock, "Maggnanuta: a Technical Term in East Syrian Spirituality and its Background," MG, 121–129. There is a helpful survey of the concept in S. P. Brock, "From Annunciation to Pentecost: the Travels of a Technical Term," in *Evlogema*, 71–91. See also Letter 5.

[2] His cell and his monastic clothing are at variance with his worldly way of life.

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استخدام الأدوات والمواد بشكل صحيح وآمن.

1. تعلم أن الأدوات والمواد لها أسماء وأشكال وأحجام مختلفة. اختر الأداة المناسبة للعمل الذي تريد القيام به. على سبيل المثال، استخدم المقص لقص الورق، وليس الأسنان. اقرأ التعليمات دائمًا قبل استخدام أي أداة أو مادة جديدة. اتبع الخطوات بعناية وانتبه للتحذيرات. إذا لم تكن متأكدًا من كيفية استخدام شيء ما، فاسأل شخصًا بالغًا.
2. تعلم كيفية تخزين الأدوات والمواد بشكل صحيح. يجب تخزين المواد الخطرة في مكان بعيد عن متناول الأطفال. يجب تخزين المواد القابلة للاشتعال في مكان بارد وجاف. يجب تخزين المواد الكيميائية في حاويات محكمة الإغلاق. يجب تخزين الأدوات الحادة في مكان آمن. يجب تخزين المواد الغذائية في مكان نظيف وجاف. يجب تخزين المواد الطبية في مكان آمن. يجب تخزين المواد الخطرة في مكان آمن. يجب تخزين المواد الغذائية في مكان نظيف وجاف. يجب تخزين المواد الطبية في مكان آمن.

3. *Let the heart of those who seek the Lord rejoice!*[4] The arms are wearied by the embrace of the Beloved. The pupils of the eyes have been consumed by tears burning with desire. The ears have ceased listening to all sounds, in amazement at the beauty of the Beautiful One. The body is now kindled with fire and with the Spirit. And the soul has become similar to God: who is able to speak of this? Blessed are you, O monk, for your blessing is one and not multiple.[5] And who may discuss it? It is not possible.

[3] To realize the importance of the mystery of the cross in East Syrian spirituality see Isaac's beautiful instruction where he describes how the Shekina, having departed from the Ark, now mysteriously resides in the cross, see Brock, *Isaac of Nineveh*, ch. 11.5. The cross came to be considered as one of the seven Sacraments by the East Syrian tradition. See G. P. Badger, *The Nestorians and their Rituals* (London: Joseph Masters, 1852), Appendix B: Mar Abd Yeshua, "The Jewel," parts 4 & 5. See also Jacob Kollaparambil, "Cross and Crucifix in the Syrian Tradition," *Harp* 8/9 (1995–96): 77–183.

[4] Ps. 105:3.

[5] Beulay suggests that the "one not multiple blessing" here may refer to the blessing "above all blessings" in Letter 14.3.

3. بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم الحمد لله رب العالمين والصلاة والسلام على سيدنا محمد وعلى آله وصحبه أجمعين. أما بعد فإن الله سبحانه وتعالى قد أنزل كتابه الكريم هدى للناس وبينات من الهدى والفرقان. وجعله شفاء لما في الصدور ورحمة للمؤمنين. وقال تعالى: ﴿وَنُنَزِّلُ مِنَ الْقُرْآنِ مَا هُوَ شِفَاءٌ وَرَحْمَةٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ﴾

LETTER 14

1. To the one who is continually plunged in a mystical immersion, away from all, in Him who is hidden within all.
2. By means of their diligence, He is revealed then to the few who gaze intently within themselves: those who make of themselves a mirror[1] in which the invisible is seen. Because by Him they are drawn through ineffable reflections of his amazing beauty which are offered to them within themselves, as the Word of God testifies: *Blessed are the pure, for they shall see God*[2] in their heart.
3. O You who have promised us this blessing which is exalted above all the blessings, make us worthy of the blessing You have promised. Give us the hope[3] which You have proclaimed to us and which torments with desire our soul which seeks it. And because we are not pure, nor worthy, may the water which flowed from your side for us, whiten the multitude of our stains. And may your blood, which was shed for our pardon, purify us and make us reflections of your purity. Because You have assumed what is ours for Yourself, my Lord—that which was not yours; give us from what is yours that which we do not possess. And since we have brought You to what is ours by our great iniquities, make us to enter into what is yours by your mercy. Make us to dwell in the world of your light in your glory. To You be glory, from all, forever and ever. Amen.

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[1] Mirror (*mahzîtâ*): according to Beulay, mirror imagery in East Syrian mystics such as Isaac, Shemʿon the Graceful, and especially John, probably comes through Gregory of Nyssa. Though originally, in a less elaborate form, this Pauline image (1 Cor. 13:12) can be found in Evagrius, who explains that the soul's beauty comes from the fact that there is an intelligible mirror in the heart in which the spiritual powers and the light of grace appear. See Beulay, LM, 155–157. Mirror imagery occurs already in the Odes of Solomon and is common in Ephrem. See E. Beck, "Das Bild vom Spiegel bei Ephrem," *OCP* 19 (1953): 5–24. On other examples of the concept of the mirror and the vision of God in early mystical literature see A. Louth, *The Origins of the Christian Mystical Tradition from Plato to Denys* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), 79–80; 91–93. But John seems to go beyond to describe a direct vision of God within the heart, not his Nature, but his Glory, leading some to consider him as an anticipation of the thinking of Gregory of Palamas. See Beulay, ES, 440–464.

[2] Matt. 5:8.

[3] Ps. 22:10.

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التمارين

١. ما هي الفرق بين الجملة الفعلية والجملة الاسمية؟ أعط مثالين لكل منهما.

٢. اقرأ الفقرة التالية: "الشمس مشرقة اليوم. الطيور تغرد في الأشجار. الأطفال يلعبون في الحديقة." حدد الجمل الفعلية والجمل الاسمية.

٣. أكمل الجمل التالية بالأفعال المناسبة: ـــــ الولد الكرة. ـــــ البنت في المدرسة. ـــــ الطيور في السماء. ـــــ الأم الطعام.

LETTER 15

1. I salute your Chastity for the love of the Most High. How long will you be called a servant? When will you be free? When will you be a lord over the impure peoples who encompass you? When will you slay and destroy the uncircumcised in your town?[1] When *will you circumcise all those who dwell in your house*,[2] *with the circumcision not made by hands*,[3] *a spiritual circumcision*?[4] When will you be a ruler and king in the eternal city, and when will the five and ten cities which were mentioned be under you here?[5] When will all the kings reverence you and all the tongues praise you because you have become the holy throne[6] of the King, the eternal King? When will you see in yourself the new heavens[7] proclaiming in you[8] the "Holy" of the Hidden One, in the order of their ranks? When will you see within you the mirror of the Light of the One who sees all, that you might see in it the things which are his and examine in it all that belongs to yourself? When will your heart become the ark of the Lord, the King of Israel, and from it[9] when will be heard by you the utterances of God and the making known of his mysteries, that all the sons[10] of your house might become his prophets proclaiming his praise, and at the sound of their clamor alien walls be overthrown[11] and the ranks of the enemies perish?

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[1] Deut. 7:2.

[2] Gen. 17:27.

[3] Col. 2:11.

[4] Rom. 2:29.

[5] cf. Lk. 19:17–19.

[6] On the soul as throne, as noted in the Introduction, Macarius, Evagrius, Stephen bar Sudhaili, and Jacob of Serug mention various aspects of throne imagery. According to Scholem, the earliest Jewish mysticism is throne-mysticism. Its most important documents were edited in the fifth and sixth centuries CE, mostly in Babylonia, thus they could have been available to early Christian writers. Scholem cites Macarius (Hom. 1,1–2) where the soul becomes the throne of glory. Scholem then gives an example of a similar reworking of the Merkabah from Jewish sources. See Scholem, *Major Trends*, 79. Schäfer cites many examples of throne-mysticism from Hekhalot literature, see Peter Schäfer, *The Hidden and Manifest God* (New York: SUNY, 1992).

[7] Is. 65:17; 66:22; 2 Peter 3:13; Apoc. 21:1.

[8] cf. Ps. 19:2.

[9] cf. Ex. 25:22.

[10] cf. Joel 3:1; Acts 2:17.

[11] cf. Joshua 6:20.

.إتصحصصبو

1. ﴿لحكو٥ ٥حوسح .ىلا٥صبو ٥صكح لا لالغ
.إزلس ز٥ ١٥٥ل ح٥ ٥لحا .٥صلغل إجحح ٥لحلل لحمح
٥لحا .ىسٍبو إلقل لقصح لالح لهذ ١٥٥ل ح٥ ٥لحا
ةورى ٥لحا .ىلا٥صبو إلةحكح ىحا٥ح ح٥ينل ح٥
.ىلا٥ح ٥تمخ إةحمخ ١٥٥حكح :ىتاح لإ إلةورى
لحكح٥ لاكحغ ١٥٥ل ٥لحا .لسوزو إلحوزىلحمح
تصحح ٥حمت لحا ىسم ققح٥ح :ىحكح ٥لسصمح
:لحكح ١٥٥ح ىح ٥ويهبو ٥لحا .٥حلغلغإ
٥لسم لسهوح٥ ٥لحوو :لحمكح ١٥٥ح ىسحسفح٥
:إلتن لسقح ىح ٥لا إلبل ٥لحا .ىكح ىكح لحكحكح
٥لحا .١٥٥ةىهح ٥حفولح إلحصح ٥ةوغ٥ ىح ىحف ح
٥ح إلبلح ٥ح لا ىهو إةوح٥ ٥لسح ىح ٥لا إلبل ٥ح
١٥٥ل ٥لحا .ىكو ١٥٥ح ٥ح ةحبحلح :٥كو ىكح
ىح ىحقلل٥ح :إلىإصبو لحكح ٥لزو ٥لحلحلح ىحكح
١٥٥ح٥ح :٥٥٥ةإ ٥ةوح٥ ١٥لإ ٥٥٥ح٥ ٥تح ٥٥٥
ىحح .٥لسححل٥ سحح٥ ٥٥قبح ١٥٥ل ىلا٥ح ىتح
إةهح ١٥ف٥ح٥ ٥تحح٥ إةو٥ ١٥ىسلل٥ ١٥٥لح٥ لا
﴾ىكححو٥ح٥

2. When will your intellect, like Moses, be covered with the thick darkness[1] of God's glory,[2] and when will your face glow with the glorious reflections[3] which shine upon it from within the thick darkness, in order that you might learn the new book of the New World[4] and explain its mysteries to the sons of Israel who have been renewed?[5] When will the Fountain of Life flow from your belly[6] and you will no longer thirstily ask for water?[7] When will you become a stranger to voices and become a living word joined to the Life in the world of light, that your silence[8] might soundlessly speak the truth of the *New World*? When will the Spirit of Life confound your stammering tongue speaking crass things, and make a new tongue to grow in you, that He might speak new things of the spiritual world with it, and that you might make disciples of all the scribes and teachers?[9] How long will the master of the house dismiss you at the door like a wayfarer? When will you be his treasurer, and life be distributed by your hands to your companions?

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[1] cf. Ex.20:21.

[2] cf. Ex.24:16.

[3] cf. Ex. 34:29.

[4] cf. Is. 65:17; Matt.18:28; 2 Peter 3:13; Apoc.21:11.

[5] cf. Ez. 11:19; 18:31; 36:26.

[6] cf. Jn. 7:38.

[7] cf. Jn. 4:14.

[8] See John the Solitary "On Prayer" where he speaks of the prayer of silence and for him silence is not only preparation but becomes the "silence of the Spirit," a prayer "stirred solely by Being, at the awe of the silence which surrounds Being." In the concluding paragraph his words come very close to the words of John of Dalyatha: "When you recite these words…let your very self become these words." Silence here is incarnational rather than Gnostic or Neoplatonic. See S. P. Brock, "John the Solitary 'On Prayer'," *JTS* ns 30 (1979): 84–101. Though God as silence does have Gnostic and Neoplatonic roots, it can also be found in Pseudepigrapha, the Book of Hierotheos and Ps-Dionysius. One of Ignatius of Antioch's key concepts is that God is silence, see letter to the Romans 2:1.

[9] cf. Jn. 6:45; Is. 54:13.

2. ابدأ بالحمد لله الذي خلق الإنسان من علق. اقرأ وربك الأكرم الذي علم بالقلم. علم الإنسان ما لم يعلم

3. Why do you ask me to tell you of what is yours, while I do not yet know about mine? But listen to me and I will give you an example which is fitting for me and for you, and also for all the generations of the world. Our intellect has been constructed as a dwelling place for its Builder, if we do not pollute it by passions so that He reject it. For it is defiled by all the images of the world, dead idols which are engraved in it. I offer you the example of this intelligible house; consider it closely. By the passions of fornication we have collected and piled up in it dead corpses. By gluttony we have filled it with foulness that expels all foods. By our fierce anger we have gathered and placed in it the bodies of vipers and all kinds of venomous creeping things.
4. For the love of money we have defiled our intellect with the carcasses of cattle, of various animals, of birds, and of all which is bought with money. We have thus defiled the habitation of the All-Holy. By the love of praise we have stripped it of the ornament with which the Wise One endued it, and we have clothed it with rags which are abhorrent to Our Lord. Through pride we have taken down the image of the eternal King and put there a large hideous idol, that the people who went out from Egypt[10] might adore it: the devils celebrate feasts on it and all the sons of the demons pipe and dance there. They sadden the angels, and their Lord is provoked to anger by this mighty grief.

[10] cf. Ex. 32.

3. ܗܢܐ ܕܐܝ ܠܝ ܐܡܪ ܠܟ ܐܠܐ ܐܢ ܐܡܪ ܠܟ ܐܠܐ ܐܢ ܐܡܪ ܠܟ ܐܠܐ ܐܢ

5. But what is there to say? If one of us were to see his house filled and stopped up with all this foulness, and he were to ask his friend who is very dear to him to enter there and be a dweller in it, now will he listen to him? Indeed not! And if we wretched ones do not agree to this, how are we not ashamed, being filled with such things, to ask the Good One to make of us a dwelling for his purity? Therefore let us not desist from our course until we make our dwelling as pure as when He fashioned it. And when He sees it, that it has been stripped of all and stands naked, He will clothe and cover it and not allow strangers to come towards it. Indeed *we are his house*,[11] *we who have been* built *for good works*[12] and not for evil ones.
6. If I write to you exalted things, you complain to me: average things are not agreeable to you; lowly things do not please you: I do not know what to do for you! So then I will give you pleasant and sweet bait: let us elevate our words from these things of the temporal world to those of the Creator of worlds. O man of God, how long will you console yourself with written things? Be rather a full flame burning for all those around you so as to see the beauty which is hidden within you. Proclaim with a quiet and still voice: "O You who are hidden and concealed in me, reveal in me your secret mystery. Show me your beauty which is within me. O You, who have constructed me as a temple for your dwelling,[13] make the thick darkness of your glory to dwell within your temple,[14] that with love the servants[15] of your sanctuary may fervently cry out "Holy" in it, with fire and with the spirit, in an ardent stirring tempered with wonder and admiration which, with modesty and great dignity, is impelled with a vital stirring of the power of your Being."[16]

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[11] Heb. 3:6.

[12] cf. Eph. 2:10.

[13] cf. 2 Cor. 6:16; 1 Cor. 3:16, 17.

[14] 1 Kings 8:10, 11.

[15] Servants (*mšâmšanê*), ministering angels.

[16] Golitzin sees in this paragraph an example of the self as a place of divine manifestation, with parallels to the eschatological enthronement in the Syriac Apocalypse of Daniel. See A. Golitzin, "Making the Inside like the Outside: Toward a Monastic *Sitz im Leben* for the Syriac Apocalypse of Daniel," Contribution to a Festschrift, edited by Monica Blanchard and Robin Darling Young for Catholic University Press, forthcoming.

5. ملا ينه نامز .ةلاسر يف ملا ىلع ةظفاحملا ىلإ ةجاحلا ةدشب ينعدت
ةيلاتلا ةرقفلا يف ةيلاتلا ةيعامتجالا تاقالعلا ىلع ريثأتلا ةلواحم
ىلع ةظفاحملا ىلإ ةجاحلا ىلع ةظفاحملا هذه ينعدت .ةيلاتلا
ةيعامتجالا تاقالعلا ىلع ريثأتلا ةلواحم ىلع ةظفاحملا ىلإ ةجاحلا

7. Be, my brother, a fish swimming and circling in the waves of waters overflowing from the Majesty. And in its holy depths hide yourself from the accursed fishers who stay at its borders, fearsome and waiting for the prey to go out; for they are not able to fish from it, afraid to enter it lest they die.
8. Feed the fire of Jesus[17] that it might take hold of the purity of your soul. Indeed it will not be quenched from the earth of the soul on which it was kindled, as long as alien waters do not come into it. By the light of this fire you will see the purity of your soul, and the beauty of the face of the Beloved when it is manifest in it. Indeed this beauty will not be visible to you outside of your soul. Nor will it be visible in it without holy purity, for without this you cannot see your own self, nor Him in your being. Afflict yourself with the desire for this, and make yourself die to life that you might see the resurrection within you.
9. For He said: *I am the Resurrection and the Life*,[18] and whoever makes himself die to this world for love of Him, will find the resurrection in himself: this is the anticipated resurrection of which Paul, the revealer of mysteries, speaks.[19] Indeed He is not far from you, He who for whose sake you are weary and afflicted all your days: He is sleeping in you and awaiting that time when you will awaken and awaken Him, that He might rescue you from the drowning waves.[20]

[17] cf. Lk. 12:49.
[18] Jn. 11:25.
[19] Eph. 2:6; Col. 2:12.
[20] cf. Matt. 8:24–26.

7. ⁂ ولا حاجة بك إلى أن تعرف كيف أو لماذا. فإن الله يعرف كل شيء عنك وعن أسرتك وعن أصدقائك وعن أعدائك. إنه يعرف ما تفعله الآن وما ستفعله في المستقبل. إنه يعرف كل شيء عن كل شخص في العالم. إنه يعرف كل شيء عن كل شيء.

8. ⁂ ولكن لا تخف. إن الله يحبك. إنه يحب كل شخص في العالم. إنه يحب الأشرار كما يحب الأبرار. إنه يحب الخطاة كما يحب القديسين. إنه يحب الأعداء كما يحب الأصدقاء. إنه يحب الجميع بالتساوي. إنه يحب كل شخص في العالم بالطريقة نفسها. إنه يحب كل شخص في العالم بالطريقة الكاملة. إنه يحب كل شخص في العالم بالطريقة الوحيدة. إنه يحب كل شخص في العالم بالطريقة الصحيحة. إنه يحب كل شخص في العالم بالطريقة الإلهية.

9. ⁂ إن الله يعرف كل شيء عنك. إنه يعرف أين أنت الآن. إنه يعرف ما تفعله الآن. إنه يعرف ما تفكر فيه الآن. إنه يعرف ما تشعر به الآن. إنه يعرف ما تريده الآن. إنه يعرف ما تحتاجه الآن. إنه يعرف ما تخافه الآن. إنه يعرف ما تأمله الآن. إنه يعرف ما تحلم به الآن. إنه يعرف ما تخطط له الآن. إنه يعرف ما تعتقد أنه يعرفه عنك الآن. إنه يعرف كل شيء عنك الآن.

10. Sanctify your soul by the remembrance of Him. Adorn yourself by gazing on Him. Unite yourself with Him in the fire of his love: by this He shows Himself to you and gladdens you by the sight of Him. This love makes Him dwell in your soul with his Father and his Spirit.[21] This love makes you yourself like a vision of his majesty[22] and on all sides you will see clearly. By this love you will tread upon the depths, and in his light you will behold the highest heavens. This love will utter in you the mysteries of the Spirit, and will reveal to you the uncreated light and show you how to walk in it.[23] By this love all which is in you will radiantly shine forth, and all which is before you will give great light. This will make you a king instead of a servant and will put all your enemies under your feet to be tread upon. This will crown your intellect with the crown which is offered at the end of the course,[24] and in the stirrings of your intellect, the contemplation of the Holy Trinity will be manifest. Therefore let us put an end to our words at this haven of all the worlds. To Him be glory above all. Amen.

[21] cf. Jn. 14:17, 23.
[22] Majesty (d-rabuteh) a variant as noted by Beulay.
[23] cf. 1 Jn. 1:7; Psalm 89:16.
[24] 2 Tim. 4:7–8.

10. ڤيه بعمد حمده لهز. ەدەەحدە ىمعد لهز. نىد ەدە لهز ىمعد ەدەەحدە حمد ىك لهز. ەلمىدۋ لحەحمەد ەمد ىك لهز. ەدە بعمد: لهز. ەلرىد ىك لهز ىمدە

LETTER 16

1. Hear, my brother, what a trustworthy man affirmed before me. "While I was proceeding on the way of mercy, the Beloved met me and led me. He walked a little in front of me and I was following behind Him. He turned his face toward me and my mind was captivated. When He saw that I was dismayed, He spoke to me with encouragement and gladdened me. With his love He kindled my heart and from the flame of desire it began to soar from its place. My soul from then on was remaining as if in annihilation but without passing away. Friends were blotted out of my heart, unloved as enemies from of old. When I became weak, for a time He left me like this, amazed[1] at Him and at what is his."
2. "From that time I was existing without mind as non-existing, without perception, without vision, and without hearing, but in amazement and great stillness. Because there is no movement or knowledge there since, in the experienced one, knowledge has forgotten itself and even how to know. When He allowed me movement, He left me immobile and hid Himself while I remembered only these things and nothing of mine was found in me."
3. Is it indeed possible to learn these things from pen and ink? No, but the one who has tasted You, O Sweet One, O Pleasant One, will understand. Whoever has been mingled with You does not blame the one who entices his friend with things such as these, but praises the one who calls to mind what is his and magnifies the Giver and, rejoicing, increases his diligence.

[1] Amazed, from *témhâ*.

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الإصحاح.

1. بعد ست مئة سنة من موت نوح، في السنة الواحدة بعد الألف، في الشهر الثاني، في اليوم الأول من الشهر، كلم الله موسى قائلاً: ٢ «كلم بني إسرائيل وقل لهم: إذا قرب أحدكم قربانًا للرب، فمن البهائم، من البقر أو من الغنم، تقربون قربانكم. ٣ إن كان قربانه محرقة من البقر، فليقرب ذكرًا صحيحًا. إلى باب خيمة الاجتماع يقربه، ليرتضى به أمام الرب. ٤ ويضع يده على رأس المحرقة، فيرتضى به كفارة عنه. ٥ ثم يذبح العجل أمام الرب، ويقرب بنو هارون الكهنة الدم، ويرشون الدم على المذبح الذي عند باب خيمة الاجتماع. ٦ ثم يسلخ المحرقة ويقطعها إلى قطعها. ٧ ويجعل بنو هارون الكاهن نارًا على المذبح، ويرتبون الحطب على النار التي على المذبح. ٨ ثم يرتب بنو هارون الكهنة القطع، الرأس والشحم، على الحطب الذي على النار التي على المذبح. ٩ وأما الأحشاء والأكارع فيغسلها بالماء، ويوقد الكاهن الكل على المذبح محرقة، وقودًا رائحة سرور للرب.

LETTER 17

[On deliverance from attacks and afflictions]

1. He for whom you intercede said: "The Lord heard your suffering on my account and He drove out from me the impure Legion.[1] He enlightened my soul with his own and gladdened me. Therefore may they be amazed by their shame, those who say: *Aha! Aha! Our eye has seen it!*[2] Henceforth may my heart be strengthened in the Lord and He will bring low those who hate us because He has exalted our low estate[3] and cast down our enemies who gloated over us for no reason.[4] Blessed is the Lord our God who dispenses for our help what afflicts us and what gladdens us."
2. He said again: "With the arrival of our lines to you, Our Lord led me to the inheritance of Life and it remains with its own forever." So then in the vision of the sapphire,[5] with the eternal eye, let us gaze on the Master of the house in the universal bosom. And outside it, let us exalt the many-splendored One and in this mystery may we find Him who effaces everything, even if we become ignorant of ourselves. O fount of foul filth, O source of all evils in which the Life is hidden: who will not marvel at himself when he descends from the place of amazement where he has encountered the Powers[6] of light and been considered beloved by them. He in them and they in him and with them in the eternal Lord!

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[1] cf. Mk. 5:9; Lk. 8:30.

[2] Ps. 35:21.

[3] cf. Ps. 136:23; Lk 1:48.

[4] Ps. 35:19.

[5] Vision of the sapphire: this image is from Evagrius. He sought all his metaphors in Scripture and described prayer and the intellect at the time of prayer in terms of "the place of God" and "the sapphire-blue light." See Ex. 24:10–11 (LXX). See William Harmless, SJ and Raymond R. Fitzgerald, SJ, "The Sapphire Light of the Mind: The Skemmata of Evagrius Ponticus," *TS* 62 (2001): 498–529. The article includes a translation of the Skemmata. See also Columba Stewart, "Imageless Prayer and the Theological Vision of Evagrius Ponticus," in *JECS* 9 (2001): 173–204, esp. 195–198. Isaac's use of "sapphire" can be found in Brock, *Syriac Fathers*, 363. See also John's Letter 48.12.

٢

بعدهما إلى الفرع الذي يليه مباشرة.

1. أما هو فإنه يعود. فعاد حماد وهو يدعو الله أن يغفر له ما فعل. فقال الله: إني قد غفرت له. وأما هو فإنه لما رأى أن الله قد غفر له ما فعل، أخذ يدعو الله أن يغفر لحماد ما فعل. فقال الله: إني قد غفرت له. فجاء حماد إلى هو فأخبره بما قال الله، فأخذ هو يدعو الله أن يغفر لحماد ما فعل، فقال الله: إني قد غفرت له.
2. وإنه من عجب: فإن حماداً وهو يدعو لهو قد دعا الله أن يغفر له ما فعل، فقال الله: إني قد غفرت له. فجاء حماد إلى هو فأخبره بما قال الله، فأخذ هو يدعو الله أن يغفر لحماد ما فعل، فقال الله: إني قد غفرت له. فجاء حماد إلى هو فأخبره بما قال الله، فأخذ هو يدعو الله أن يغفر لحماد ما فعل، فقال الله: إني قد غفرت له.

3. Do you ask where is the place or do you desire that I speak of it?[7] Come, let us be amazed! Or again, you ask what is its movement[8] or its crying "Holy"? Only silence is permitted and nothing else. *Whoever understands, let him understand!*[9] And who does not understand, in silence let him honor the One who is glorified and who loves to glorify whomever seeks to be glorified. How can we name the place of the vision? It is the likeness of the One who sees all in Himself just as He is to be seen in everyone, small and great. Then in silence, let us reverence our Word,[10] with wonder let us embrace our Mystery,[11] and with simple beautiful deeds let us proclaim mystically: *Blessed be the glory of the Lord from its place!*.[12]
4. Pray for me, I beseech you, that I not be a joy to my enemies.[13] I see that I go backwards more than forwards and I revive the passions which are in me! I preach what shames me and I deserve this shame by my ministry. But the Lord of all has hidden it because his mercy is great and He is good.

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[6] Powers (*haïlê*), an order of the angels, angelic Powers. Unlike Pseudo-Dionysius, John tends not to distinguish the angelic orders but refers to them all as spiritual Powers.

[7] On place (*atrâ*) see Stewart, "Imageless Prayer," 195–201. Golitzin analyzes its occurrence in Aphrahat also giving its linguistic history, including roots of *maqom* in the Hebrew Bible, as the place of divine manifestation and *topos* in the Septuagint, and as "a stand-in for God himself." In the Hekhalot literature, *maqom* is used as a divine name. See Alexander Golitzin, "The Place of the Presence of God: Aphrahat of Persia's Portrait of the Christian Holy Man," an Essay in Honor of Archimandrite Aimilianos of the Monastery of Simonos Petras, Mount Athos, 1–31. http://www.marquette.edu/maqom/aimilianos Some of the other examples of *atrâ* may be found in Letters 1.3–5; 2.1,6; 17.3; 19.7; 38.2; 40.4; 47.6; 48.5–7, 11–13.

[8] Ez. 1:12.

[9] Matt. 19:12.

[10] Jn. 1:1

[11] cf. Eph. 1:9–10.

[12] Ez. 3:12.

[13] cf. Ps. 38:16.

3. ملا هه لمؤا مفلا لا: آه معمحلا وحوحه خحا لا:
لا لمؤمز. آه لما ره٥ه٥ه٥ه٥. هجحا ححسوا مفهه
٥لاه لل. هج وهفه بهفه. ه٥ج ولا هفه: نمز
حجلما حلمحمحجحس: ه٥نمر وبفحس ربزحا وبعلحس. لما
نفمه لؤلؤا ه٥مه٥ه. لؤلؤ وهه ٥ه٥ وحه ٥ه٥ نرا. لمعا
لمحلجحا وجه ححلا حزبزا مدلمدا ٥لمز. مجه حجلما
لحمحلل نمز: ٥حلمحلما لؤلؤا نخفه. ٥حم هه٥ه
فهتلها حزلؤا نرحم. حنس هه لمزمز ٥لمز حم لمؤه٥.

4. لؤلؤ ححب خحا لما مهم: ولا ٥مه لما لحهتلب. نرا لما
وححهلؤه حم ٥لمز وحوحه لما لؤا ٥ه٥جحوحه هج لما. ٥حسقه
لما وحه ٥لاه٥ه وه٥ه٥ه٥ وحلاه٥ه لؤه لما. ٥ه٥ه لما: لما
ه٥ه٥ه٥ حم ٥ه٥ه٥ لما. لما لمؤه ٥ه٥ه٥ حم ٥ه٥ه٥ه٥
ه٥ه٥ه٥ه٥ ٥ه٥ه٥ه٥ه٥ ٥ه٥ه٥ه٥ه٥ ٥ه٥ه٥ه٥ه٥ ٥ه٥ه٥ه٥ه٥

LETTER 18

[On the rule of novices[1]]

1. This is the modest rule which is loved by the Lord.
2. Let a man's eyes not look here and there, but only be looking in front of him.[2]
3. Let him not speak in excess, but only what is necessary.
4. Let him use shabby clothing to supply the need of the body.
5. Let him use nourishment for bodily sustenance and not in greed. Let him be sustained with a little of everything and not refuse some things while filling his belly with what his will chooses, for discretion is better than any of the virtues.
6. Let him not drink wine except when he is with others, or because of infirmity or disease.
7. Let him not interrupt one who is speaking, to speak of himself like one who is uncultivated, but let him wait like a wise man.
8. And wherever he happens to be, may he become little and a servant of his brothers.
9. That he not uncover any part of his body in front of anyone,[3] that he not touch the body of anyone without necessary cause, and that he not allow anyone to touch his own body except for reason of illness.
10. Let him beware of familiarity as of death, his murderer.

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[1] There are many references to the teaching of Abba Isaiah in this letter. Some of the counsels may also be found among the writings of Isaac of Nineveh as noted by Beulay and Wensinck. But Beulay concludes that one cannot deny the authorship of John of Dalyatha; see Beulay, *Collection des Lettres*, 41–42. The Syriac text of Abba Isaiah is found in R. Draguet, *Les cinq recensions de l'Ascéticon syriaque d'Abba Isaïe*, CSCO 289/290 [text]; 293/294 [translation] (1968). There is also a translation of the Greek edition with correspondences to the Syriac text noted: *Abbé Isaïe, Recueil Ascétique*, tr. Dom Hervé de Broc, Spiritualité Orientale 7 (Bégrolles-en-Mauge: Abbaye de Bellefontaine, 1976). The numbers of the Logoi given here are those of Draguet. In his Discourses, John of Dalyatha also addresses issues similar to those raised in this Letter adding to the probability of him being the author of this Letter.

[2] Abba Isaiah, Logos X, 4.

[3] Ibid. Log. X, 9.

.لوقع لتلو لهضولا للح لتهجسملو

1. هذه لولحلا بسبو لهجا لهضولا هذه.
2. ءاهجمضحا لا :لحلا هجا هلو ءاهتبث قبسا لو ءاهجمضحا لا :لحلا هجا هلو ءاهتبث قبسا لو ءهجسح ةلاز لوقا.
3. ىكبو حجا ءهجسح لا :لتلا لصفا لذه.
4. ءهجسح ليلد يف ءاهقو لهجمضحا لهجا لهجمضحا.
5. ءهجسح لذه :ءهجسا هيلقو لهنمضحا لتهجسح لا. لهجا :لهجا ءهجسح لذه. :لهجمضحا ءهجسح يف لهلاجسح لهجا :لهجا ءهجسح لذه. :لهجمضحا ءهجسح يف لهلاجسح لهجا قبسا لذه يف لتلاو ءهجسح لهجا هجو يف هقبت لهجا ءهجسح.
6. لهجسمضحا لهجا هل :لهتلا هجو يف ليهل لتمضح لهجسمضحا لهجا هل :لهتلا هجو يف ليهل لتمضح لهعبا لا لهءاقبح.
7. لذو لا جا هق لصفا :لصفضحا هقو لهجا هجسح ءاهجمضحا لذه لا ذو لا جا هق لصفا :لصفضحا هقو لهجا هجسح ءاهجمضحا لذه لا تلي لا لهجمضحا جا.
8. ءهجسح لتهجمضحا لتهجسح لتهجسمضحا يف لهجا :لهجمضحا يف لهجا لتهجمضحا ء

11. Let him have a chaste arrangement[4] for sleeping lest the Power guarding him stay away from him. And when he sleeps, let no one see him, if possible.
12. Let him not spit in front of anyone[5] and if a cough comes to him at table, let him turn his face from the table and then cough.
13. May he eat and drink with sobriety as is fitting for the sons of God.
14. Let him not hold out his hand boldly before his companions. If a stranger sits with him, let him press him to eat two or three times, and then calmly take food and place it on the table and not reject it.
15. Let his feet and clothing be orderly at table.[6]
16. When he yawns let him cover his mouth lest it be seen, and draw his breath in and it will pass.[7]
17. When he enters a cell whether it be his master's, or that of his disciple, or that of his friend, let him be vigilant, not noticing or inquiring about what is in it.[8] And even if he is forced by its owner to do this, let him not be persuaded. Whoever is presumptuous in this is a stranger to the monastic habit and to Christ who bestows it. Also, he should not look at the place where the utensils of his friend's cell are placed.
18. Let him gently close and open his own door and that of others, without a sound being heard.
19. Let him not hurry while walking except in case of necessity.
20. May he be dependent and obedient in every action.
21. Let him not keep company with anyone who is held by possessions, or by money, or by worldly people, lest he become a slave of Satan.
22. Let him speak pleasantly with everyone and look at everyone with modesty and not focus his eyes on a man's face.

[4] Ibid. Log. X, 69.
[5] Ibid. Log. X, 17.
[6] Ibid. Log. X, 12.
[7] Ibid. Log. X, 20.
[8] Ibid. Log. X, 54.

11. ⠕⠓⠁⠝ ⠁⠝⠙ ⠎⠁⠊⠙ ⠞⠕ ⠓⠊⠍ ⠞⠓⠁⠞ ⠞⠓⠑ ⠎⠁⠍⠑ ⠙⠁⠽ ⠁⠎ ⠞⠓⠑ ⠎⠥⠝ ⠕⠗⠙⠁⠊⠝⠑⠙ ⠞⠓⠑ ⠍⠕⠧⠑⠍⠑⠝⠞⠎ ⠕⠋ ⠞⠓⠑ ⠎⠞⠁⠗⠎ ⠁⠝⠙ ⠞⠓⠑ ⠏⠇⠁⠝⠑⠞⠎ ⠊⠝ ⠞⠓⠑⠊⠗ ⠉⠕⠥⠗⠎⠑⠎ ⠁⠗⠕⠥⠝⠙ ⠞⠓⠑ ⠎⠥⠝.
12. ⠕⠓⠁⠝ ⠁⠝⠙ ⠎⠁⠊⠙ ⠞⠕ ⠓⠊⠍ ⠞⠓⠁⠞ ⠞⠓⠑ ⠍⠕⠧⠑⠍⠑⠝⠞ ⠕⠋ ⠞⠓⠑ ⠎⠥⠝ ⠊⠎ ⠝⠕⠞ ⠙⠥⠑ ⠞⠕ ⠞⠓⠑ ⠍⠕⠧⠑⠍⠑⠝⠞ ⠕⠋ ⠞⠓⠑ ⠑⠁⠗⠞⠓ ⠁⠗⠕⠥⠝⠙ ⠊⠞⠎ ⠁⠭⠊⠎ ⠁⠝⠙ ⠞⠓⠁⠞ ⠞⠓⠑ ⠎⠥⠝ ⠊⠎ ⠝⠕⠞ ⠁⠞ ⠗⠑⠎⠞ ⠁⠎ ⠊⠞ ⠙⠕⠑⠎ ⠝⠕⠞ ⠍⠕⠧⠑ ⠁⠗⠕⠥⠝⠙ ⠞⠓⠑ ⠑⠁⠗⠞⠓ ⠁⠞ ⠁⠇⠇ ⠞⠊⠍⠑⠎.
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23. When he travels on the road, let him not be ahead of anyone who is older than he.[9] And if his friend stays behind for a certain necessity, let him step aside for a little while and wait until he comes. Whoever does not do this is foolish, like a lawless wild boar. And if his friend speaks with those persons whom they have met, let him be patient while not hurrying the one who is speaking.
24. Whoever is healthy, may he say to the one who is infirm before the scheduled time: "Come, let us eat!"[10]
25. Let him not blame a man for his transgression whatever it be, but in all things let him make himself the guilty one.[11]
26. May he choose to do every lowly act, with humility.
27. When he laughs, let him not show his teeth.[12]
28. If there be a necessity to speak with women, let him speak while turning his face from seeing them.[13] And as to the daughters of the Covenant,[14] let him avoid meeting them and conversing with them or even seeing them, as he would with a snare of Satan, lest he defile his heart with the filth of impure passions. Even if they are his natural sisters, let him guard himself from them in all things as from strangers.
29. Let him be careful of contact with his kindred, lest his heart become cold to the love of God.
30. From fellowship or familiarity with young boys, let him keep away as from friendship with the Evil One.[15]
31. May one person be his counselor and intimate acquaintance and companion:[16] one who fears the Lord and dwells in peace with himself and who is poor in his manner of life, but rich in the mysteries of God. From any other person let him guard his secrets and his ways of living and not reveal his labors and his battles.

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[9] Ibid. Log. X, 73.

[10] Ibid. Log. XII, 1, 42.

[11] Ibid. Log. X, 26.

[12] Ibid. Log. X, 68.

[13] Ibid. Log. X, 78–79.

[14] Daughters of the Covenant: see Letter 4:2. The occurrence of the phrase in this Letter convinced A. Vööbus of an early composition of the Letter and against authorship by John, as noted by Beulay, ES, 42–43.

[15] Abba Isaiah, Log. V, 2.

[16] cf. Abba Isaiah, Log. V, 11.

23. ولن يدخل أحد الجنة إلا بهذه الكلمة وبفضلها. لا يوجد أحد
يستحق الجنة بسبب أعماله الصالحة. بل يدخل الجنة فقط
بفضل الله ورحمته. لأن الله وحده هو الذي يستحق أن يُعبد.
ولا يوجد أحد يستحق أن يُعبد إلا الله وحده.

24. ولا أحد يعرف الله ويعبده إلا بهذه الكلمة. هذه الكلمة
هي مفتاح الجنة.

25. ولا تعني هذه الكلمة أن هناك آلهة أخرى. إلا
أن هناك إله واحد فقط.

26. ولا يوجد أي شيء آخر يستحق أن يُعبد.

27. ويجب أن نؤمن بها.

28. ومن يقل أن الله واحد ولكنه لا يؤمن بالكلمة التي تعني
ذلك. ولا يقبل الله منه أي شيء حتى يؤمن بها. ومن
يقل أن هناك آلهة أخرى غير الله. فإن الله لا يقبل منه
أي شيء حتى يؤمن بالكلمة التي تعني أن الله واحد.

29. ولا يوجد أي شيء يستحق أن يُعبد إلا الله وحده.
ولا يوجد أي شيء يستحق أن يُعبد مع الله.

30. ومن يعبد أي شيء مع الله أو بدلاً من الله فإن الله لا
يقبل منه أي شيء.

31. ومن لا يؤمن بالله وحده ويعبد أي شيء آخر معه فإن الله
لا يقبل منه أي شيء. ولا يقبل منه أي شيء حتى يؤمن
بالله وحده ويترك كل شيء آخر يُعبد. ولا يقبل منه أي
شيء حتى يؤمن بالله وحده ويترك كل شيء آخر يُعبد.

32. Let him not cast off his cloak unnecessarily where he may be seen by another and let him go out modestly for his necessities as someone who reveres his guardian angel.[17]
33. May he use all things in the fear of God and with mortal constraint, even if the heart is unwilling.
34. Poison is better food for him than eating with a woman,[18] even if it be his mother or his sister.
35. Rather than cover himself in a cloak with another and sleep like this,[19] even if it be his natural brother, better for him to dwell with a dragon!
36. If the one who is older than he says to him on the road or at work: "Come let us say the psalms!"—he must obey; otherwise, let his tongue keep silent and his heart glorify God.
37. May he not quarrel about anything[20] and not bring false accusations, nor deceive, nor swear on the Name of the Lord.
38. Let him be despised, yet not despise; suffer wrong, yet not defraud. It is better that these bodily things perish with the body rather than even one of the things of the soul be lacking.
39. Let him not utter judgment with anyone, but let him endure to be judged as guilty even when he is innocent.
40. May he not love himself in any of the things of the world.[21]
41. Let him obey superiors, but avoid mingling with them: this is a snare which takes the dissolute to destruction. O insatiable friend of your belly, better for you to put fiery coals in your belly and not the torments of superiors.
42. May he pour forth his mercy on all mankind, while being removed and cut off from everyone.[22]

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[17] Abba Isaiah, Log. X, 57.

[18] Ibid. Log. V, 2.

[19] Ibid. Log. X, 8.

[20] Ibid. Log. V, 16.

[21] cf. Jn. 12:25.

[22] See Evagrius, "Chapters on Prayer" # 124 in *Evagrius, The Pratikos and Chapters on Prayer*, trans. J. E. Bamberger (CS 4, 1981), 76.

32. ولا يعلم عدد أيضا حكمه من السماء: أحل وحرم وعاقب وغفر. ما من أرض تعد لأحد شيئا: فضل وخطيئة.
33. وتحدث: وحكمت سنته لمن يخشاه وحده. وعد بالجزاء وبشر. لا حد لقدرته. ولا حد لرحمته.
34. ومن يعرف الله حق معرفته: فمن حكمته يعلم أن الله يحب أن يعرف. ولا يعرف إلا من أحب.
35. ومن يحبه الله: يهديه إلى نوره من أقصى الأرض وأدناها: ويجعل له حكمة وعلما.
36. ولا يزهد في الدنيا إلا من عرف أن الدنيا دار ممر: وأن الآخرة دار مقر. فجعل الدنيا مزرعة: وجعل الآخرة مآبا.
37. ومن الله ولا يخاف إلا ذنبه. ولا يرجو إلا ربه. ولا يأمل إلا ما عند الله: ولا يتكل إلا على الله.
38. فمن توكل على الله فهو حسبه. وهو الله الذي لا إله إلا هو: عليه توكلت وإليه متاب: ومن أناب إلى الله وعمل صالحا.
39. وأخلص لله دينه: فإن الله يغفر الذنوب جميعا: ويتوب على من تاب.
40. ولا ينسى من عمل مثقال ذرة خيرا أو شرا: ويجزي بالحسنى الحسنى.
41. ومن عرف الله حق معرفته: عرف أن الله هو الحق. وأن ما يدعون من دونه هو الباطل. وأن الله هو العلي الكبير.
42. ومن عرف الله حق معرفته: عرف أن الله يحب أن يعبد. ولا يعبد إلا بما أمر به.

43. Let him guard against abundant speech, because this extinguishes the fiery stirrings in his heart which originate in God.
44. Let him flee from finding fault with associates and strangers as from a vicious lion!
45. Let him not pass in the vicinity of those who are wrathful or contentious, lest his heart be filled with anger and the darkness of error reign in his soul.
46. Let him not dwell with the boastful, lest the activity of the Holy Spirit be removed from his soul and it become a dwelling for all wicked passions.
47. If you observe all of these admonitions and engage at all times in thinking about God, truly in a short time your soul will be able to see the light of Christ in itself and never again will it become blind. To Him be glory from all who love Him. Amen.

43. ومن يحبه ومن الله: ويوفر المحمدة لمن يشاء ومن يحب من خلقه وقد تقدم ذكره.
44. وسيئة ذلك ومن ثم: لتتوبة الملتحم وحمر فقرة ومن ذلك وجزمه.
45. ومحمد الجاهلية والمحصنات لا يحب: إلا بالتوبة المذكورة وتحملوا العقوبة ومعها وتحملوا الحدود.
46. ومن يتوب فإن الله: يحب إلا التوبة ومن يعمل الصالحات وعمله: ومعها من قبل ومن يتب الله عليه ❖
47. والذين. يعبدون إلا الله: ما لا يملك لهم رزقا فابتغوا عند الله الرزق واعبدوه واشكروا له إليه ترجعون: والذين آمنوا وعملوا الصالحات لنبوئنهم من الجنة غرفا تجري من تحتها الأنهار خالدين فيها ونعم أجر العاملين. الذين صبروا وعلى ربهم يتوكلون.

LETTER 19

[On poverty and the narrow way,
and that we must not be anxious for bodily things]

1. Indeed before our freedom has been proven by endurance,[1] we seek rest for our souls. And we make the Lord of all to serve our stubborn will, but we do not obey his will. He has shown us by his painful and tormented journey how we should follow Him if truly we are determined to arrive where He is. But we look with desire on these things which draw us backwards.
2. He and his did not possess nourishment for a day, but we seek to provide necessities for years. He has admonished us not to be anxious about tomorrow,[2] but our doubt seeks to provide our necessities far in advance. He said that *He has nowhere to lay his head*,[3] yet to satisfy the madness of our desire we build for ourselves an elegant shelter. Woe to us, rational beings, we seek decoration from what is not able to provide it! We have no shame before Paul walking barefoot and stripped, while we rejoice in black shoes and assuage our bodies with soft things. Paul disfigured his body that he might be beautiful to the One who had chosen him, while we wretched ones beautify our bodies to be ugly before the Beautiful One.

[1] cf. Lk. 21:19.
[2] cf. Matt. 6:34.
[3] cf. Matt. 8:20; Lk. 9:58.

٩

وزارة الزراعة والموارد المائية والبيئة: الإدارة العامة لحماية البيئة.

1. يجب على المنشآت الراغبة بالحصول على ترخيص مزاولة نشاط يؤثر على البيئة. تقديم: طلب ترخيص مزاولة نشاط مؤثر على البيئة، وفق النموذج المعد لذلك، مرفقاً بالوثائق المطلوبة. تحديد: تحدد الوثائق المطلوبة بقرار من الوزير المختص بشؤون البيئة. دراسة: تدرس الإدارة العامة الطلب والوثائق المرفقة به، وتتحقق من استيفائها للشروط المقررة.
2. يجب على المنشآت التي يحتمل أن يؤدي نشاطها إلى تلوث البيئة، أن تقدم مع طلب الترخيص: دراسة تقييم الأثر البيئي للنشاط المراد ترخيصه. تحديد: تحدد الدراسة المطلوبة بقرار من الوزير المختص بشؤون البيئة. محتوى: تتضمن الدراسة وصفاً للنشاط وموقعه، وتحديداً للآثار البيئية المتوقعة، وتدابير التخفيف المقترحة، وخطة للمراقبة والإشراف. إعداد: يعد الدراسة مكتب استشاري معتمد من الإدارة العامة للبيئة. مراجعة: تراجع الدراسة من قبل لجنة فنية تشكل لهذا الغرض.

3. The son of Zebedee, the beloved disciple who knows the One who is from the beginning and has even seen and touched Him and proclaims Him:[4] he is sad and his appearance altered, being despised for his tattered worn out clothing, begging pieces of bread for a meal, and showing himself as an unknown to those who do not know him. While I, feeble and negligent, not able to proceed after him on account of my laziness, present myself as a just one, worthy of being provided for by many. And I retort to the one who advises me: "All my passions have not been satisfied, and know that their fullness is the will of the Lord." I might say, therefore, that Paul and all the company of luminous beings who have concluded their lives in terrors and troubles, considered as refuse by everyone,[5] even thought nothing of by despised persons: perhaps have they not pursued the will of God? But it is their Lord Himself whom I must look on to learn the truth they embraced.
4. For they have heard it said: *I am the Way*.[6] Therefore also they have reached the end valiantly and have come to Him. I understand that from these bitter things his sweetness flows; I will rejoice in my troubles that He may gladden me by his manifestation. Indeed, while I bear his marks in my members,[7] I rejoice that what He endured might be found in me.
5. For a day's grievous suffering that you bear for Him, in exchange you will receive the world of light. If you endure a little hunger because of love for Him, also the desire for Him will torture you to see his face. If darkness covers your face from suffering hardships for Him, He will make you shine with his glory for a length of time without end. If you strip off these things of yours, He will clothe you with his light and will hide from your view these things of yours. If you give up these things which you possess, you will possess Him in your soul forever. But more than suffering hardships, the Lord of all seeks integrity of purpose.[8]

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[4] cf. 1 Jn. 1:1–2.

[5] cf. 1Cor. 4:13.

[6] Jn. 14:6.

[7] cf. Gal. 6:17.

[8] Integrity of purpose (*trîšût nîšâ*), considered by John as a gift of discernment invoked of God and granted by Him, rather than as a personal acquisition. See Beulay, ES, 86–89.

3. ܟܝ ܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܡܪܝ ܒܝܬ ܗܘ ܕܢܫܬܘܩ ܒܗ ܘܢܫܬܟܚ ܒܗ ܘܢܫܬܒܚ ܒܗ ܘܢܫܬܒܚ ܒܗ ܘܢܫܬܒ

6. Heaven and earth do not limit God, and He dwells and shows Himself in the intellect which keeps itself pure. The Cherubim and the Seraphim look modestly at the glory of his Greatness, but the pure soul sees this glory within itself without a veil. When the intellect has been purified of the obscurity of error, it becomes a heaven for the angels of light. Where the glory of their Lord has been revealed by love, there also they cry out their "Holy, Holy, Holy."[9] A brother truly affirmed in my presence: "When I take care of my soul, with the help of God who strengthens me, I see his revelation in my heart in an ineffable glory. Then also the holy angels appear to me in an incomprehensible mystery and they show their love for me which goes beyond telling.[10] But at the times of my negligence, they appear to me with a cheerless countenance."
7. *Blessed are the pure in heart for* in their heart *they will see God.*[11] In the place which has been purified, the glory of the Pure One is seen. This is the Kingdom of which He said: "It is hidden within you."[12] All who have exchanged their world for the desire of Him and have abandoned their corrupted life have found as world for themselves, the Creator of worlds. Indeed they do not perceive division (between day and night) because the darkness is not named in his place.

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[9] There is a beautiful passage in John's Discourses concerning the sounds of the angels: "Let no one suppose when he hears the cry "Holy, Holy, Holy" of the spirits or their ethereal sounds that it is the echo of something celestial…the amazing thing is that in the vision of God there is no sound; their utterances are their wondrous impulses: that is, their substance pulsating entirely in the Spirit the Paraclete in the likeness of some fervent heat of inexpressible brilliance." Found in Discourse 3, "On the demon of fornication," Vat. 124, 287b. See also Letter 31.4.

[10] In the Discourses John describes this love of the angels: "<The guardian angel> shows his love and affection for him, and how much he rejoices in his care, and he speaks in him impulses of love, warm encouragements, and compliments and makes the heart soar with ardor in them, and a person is enkindled and inflamed with his love and is fervent in speaking freely with him…." See Discourse 7, Vat. 124, 304a.

[11] Matt. 5:8.

[12] cf. Lk. 17:21.

6. ⁘ ⁘ ⁘

LETTER 20

[On swinish gluttony]

1. The hunter who hunts his prey spreads the bait on his snare and so he is able to capture it. The Rebel captures the monk by his belly. Consider your father, how his beguiler deceived him,[1] that you might learn how to do battle with him. The solitary who fills his belly is a shepherd of swine and his herd is the worst kind. But the solitary who keeps a rule is the shepherd of the flock of Christ and he is greatly loved by the Master of the shepherds.
2. My brothers, the passions are knit together; if you are enslaved to this passion, you will be perforce a slave to its companion; but the fount of all of them is gluttony. Woe to the solitary whom sleep overcomes! It is certain that this one is a slave of the ravenous bear of gluttony. Do not say: "I fasted one day or two and again overwhelming sleep assailed me." Those who have not had an orderly experience of fasting speak like this.[2] That limbs unaccustomed to fasting may be quickly paralyzed, I am completely convinced. But if you hold to a rule of little food and do not change the rule for unnecessary reasons, you will seek rest for your body, but you will not find it. And when you lie down, your head covered, you will find yourself awake. By all means you constantly have need of this rule. Do not overfill your belly, lest fornication torture you. Do not greatly weaken your body, lest your enemy make you weary. Hold to a rule and, behold, henceforth you will go forward on the royal way and your journey will be without fear.

[1] cf. Gen. 3:6, 7.

[2] The purpose of fasting is seen by John to be the purification of the passions of the soul. But something characteristic of his thinking is that he also considers fasting as enabling the body itself to participate in the mystical life through a spiritualization of the senses. See Beulay, ES, 71–76.

ص

وحتهص: ٥حلا ٤هز لهنز لهنا ٤هز لهنا.

1. ولز ٥هجه حهه٥ :٥سه لحا ٤ز٤ لهمج :لهز .ولز لهز ٥هجه حهه٥ :٥سه لحا ٤ز٤ لهمج :لهز .ولز لهز لهخلا ٢هحلح .لهوند٥ حه ولز ٥هنتحه لهسه٥ :٥ه حهه. ٥هه٥ حتمأ حنا لها ٤حلالح :٥ههحه٥ ٥هز لهمه. لهبه ٥ههه٥ :لهتس٥ ٥٥ لهحز :٥هنتز لهفز لهسه. ٥لهحتنه :لهسه٥ ٥هحز ٥٥ لهحز :لهههلا زهلز لهسه. لهسه٥ ٥هحز ٥٥ لهحز :لهههلا زهلز لهسه. ٥لهحتنه :

3. As for one who is ill with a high fever and suffers severe pain, if you bring him foods which stir up desire at their sight, his abdomen loathes them and he rejects them; so also for the natural desire of fornication if it is weakened by lack of sufficient food. And if the demons bring to mind the shapes and faces which stir passion, we will remain without lasting injury, our conscience loathing the desire of fornication because the natural passion is found in a state of weakness. By poor and insufficient food, the passions are weakened; and at the remembrance of God,[3] they perish and die. It is the sword which kills them.
4. Our Lord Jesus Christ, slay the passionate desires of your servants with the desire of You. Amen! My Lord, cast your holy fire on the earth of our soul,[4] that it might burn all the choking thorns that hamper the holy seed which was sown in our field;[5] so that the seed might produce fruit in us at the three levels[6] in which consists all of the nature of rational creatures, whether spiritual or corporeal.

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[3] Remembrance of God (*ʿuhdânâ dalâhâ*), see Letter 50. See also Beulay, ES, 124–142. John's writings evoke later Byzantine Hesychast experience without reflecting any of their techniques. A possible allusion to technique may be found in Letter 36.6 where the invocation of Father is used to help direct the intellect (*hawnâ*) within the heart. More study may also reveal parallels with Islamic tradition and the Moslem use of *dikr* as noted by Beulay in his "Formes de Lumière et Lumière sans forme, Le thème de la Lumière dans la Mystique de Jean de Dalyatha," MG, 133.

[4] cf. Lk. 12:49.

[5] cf. Matt. 13:7; Mk. 4:7.

[6] For John the three levels (*mšuhtê* or *taksê*) are: of the body, of the soul, and of the spirit. They are not separate natures but different orientations of the soul. This tripartite schema of the spiritual life has its roots in St. Paul, but is first elaborated on by John the Solitary. See discussion in P. Harb, "Doctrine Spirituelle de Jean le Solitaire," *PdO* 2 (1971): 225–60. See also Bruce Bradley "Jean le Solitaire," *DSpir* 8 (1974): 768–770. Isaac of Nineveh refers to it explicitly, see Brock, *Isaac of Nineveh*, chap. 20. For applications of the doctrine to various other East Syrian writers, see P. Beulay, LM, 97–124. This idea is developed in other Letters of John: 23, 34, 40, 51.

3. ⁂ ⁂ ⁂

5. In conclusion, whoever fills his belly and is enslaved by this passion, he is a slave who is in bondage to all the passions. And when this is conquered, we will easily conquer all of them. This is the source of fornication; money is sought because of it and also human glory so that honor may abound. Anger, the untamed dog, barks because of it since they do not give it food. Wandering in villages and with friends is also to fill our belly. In short, all murders and all evil deeds are done because of it, so that Sheol is filled up. All of this is done by the destroying she-wolf. Let it be tortured lest it torture us. Because the more we fill it, dung abounds: these then are the stinking fruits which appear from it. Others appear from it which have been previously mentioned and they are likewise abhorrent, depriving us of eternal life when they are ripe. Let us not be fools who destroy their life, but let us use wisely these things which only last a day.
6. As for me, my conscience strongly reproves me when I consider those who do not use these things fittingly. But when they are full of their desires, and the corruption of these things is placed before their eyes, they are ashamed of it and turn their faces from it. Do they not recall the experience of this foulness and then feel shame at it? You see, my brother, that all worldly work comes to this. So then, direct your life as one who is wise in the use of what is from the world and of which you have need.
7. O Christ, Source of our life, raise us beyond a worldly work that we see to have such an end. Rather, those things whose fruits appear to You as desirable, and which also the Servants[7] of your Holiness rejoice in: let them be our work and our meditation in this limited time which You have given us to prove our freedom. And on account of this ministry, may we come to You with unveiled confidence, by your mercy. Amen.

[7] Servants (*mšâmšanê*), ministering angels.

5. هحا: هوا ابحج: بححلهما لعا لمحكه ههنه للهو وهو: لحها
هوهححكه: لحولا لمه هوه. لعقب لحكا بححه هك هوو
حهههحكه: هلحكلهه لهها. للعلا لححا بحوه. لحبا للهههحه.
لا لححا لمحوه: لمتما هوهبو: هلحكلهه لعلو لسحهه
لمؤههحو لمهج. هك ححهه لا سحا هلحكلهه: لمححما
حتب لحهه للقه لحو: لحها. هها. هها لهبو بتحب لحهه
لمحلو لمحف حهحه بحهه. للهلل لهعه هلحكلهه
بحو لحلهه. حـ لمعفه لهجل لا. هب معلهغل. للهوهه
لمتها لمؤه لهلا حهه. هـهههه للجا هنه بحكه هـهه
هعهو لمتما بحهه هوهلما هوهلهبحـ. هسلهه هعهو
متا هه: لمتحـ هوهلما لحها بحه. هعهلل هبهو بهحلهه
بححكو لهحكحهحهه حـ بحكـ لهحكحو. هبه لا بهه حـ
بحهه لمعقب هما سعلهه لل. هوهتب بهحهه للهقه
بحهه لمعقب هما سعلهه لل. هوهتب بهحهه للهقه
*لمهه لهحو

6. لل بحهه لما لمحلهه حـ: لمؤلل بـ لمهخ حلٍ بو لما
هوه بحكعفهو هه حـ بهه هسعلهه لمكنه
لمهخه: هوهحبهب هوتبت بهه هسهلهه: هوهلـ
لسهب هحهو بهوخ بـ لل. هوتها بحهوهخه هعه
هحـ لمهحو: هسا لمبب: بهسلهه لهه هوهلهنهو
بحلحـ هتب بخ لمعهن هما بهه. هغه لمححـ بحهه
*لما هعبه هوهحـ هعه

7. هعهه هعحهه حهو لسحهه مـ حـ لخا تب لهما هسما.
سهعقعحـ هاه: هسلهه بـ لـــق هوهو لمؤه بحلو
لحا لمهه: هيهه بحهه لهبو هوه: هبهه هوبهه
هعه سهه. لمؤلب بهوحـ حـ لحهبو لهسلهه
حهلهه لهه لا لمهه حتبهبت هلهـ لا لمهوهلهحـ*

LETTER 21

[On irascibilty and on vigilance]

1. Woe to the irascible monk whose heart is a dwelling of vipers, for each day he drinks from its venom! He who is a babbler drives himself from the Lord because grace does not rest upon him. How long will the slanderer find a house that he might erect for himself without God's covering? With whom will the wrathful one be at peace who always troubles his heart and makes the Spirit of God depart from it and the scorpion gives birth there and multiplies?
2. Flee from the one with two tongues who shoots poisonous arrows into the heart of his listeners. Avoid proud persons who wage war with God. Remain alien to all rich people whose work is completely idolatrous. Do not be a companion to those who are contentious lest Legion[1] lodge within your house.[2] Guard against the wrathful person who is himself the devil incarnate. Close your ears and flee from anyone who praises you in your presence lest he strip you of God and clothe you in the rags with which he is clad. God does not dwell with the lover of power nor should you dwell with him. The one who abides by his own will when there is no necessity is an enemy of the will of God. The insolent one is like a serpent and his food is dust.[3] Whoever raises his voice, it is certain that Christ is not in him.
3. Keep these admonitions of your friend that you might be preserved by them.

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[1] cf. Mk. 5:9.

[2] cf. Lk. 12:49. In some passages, John comes close to saying what is described in the homilies of Macarius, i.e., that the devil can penetrate the soul. Whether or not this ever becomes, even in Macarius, a Messalian interpretation of the Holy Spirit living with the devil in the soul is unclear. But in his Discourses John says clearly that the demons can never know the thoughts of the soul. See Beulay, ES, 152–174, esp. 159–160. John has, in fact, a great deal to say about struggles with the devil. See Discourses 3–6, Vat. 124, 284a–304a.

[3] cf. Matt. 13:7; Mk. 4:7.

ما

وجهتي نحو البعيد الذي لا أسمه يتهجى.

1. من حيث جسر الرماد. الذاكرة لم تسجل هذا. وأجابه: لا أعرف من أين جاء هذا الصوت. هذا من الأف مختلف. ولكنه لم يكن هو الذي كان يعتقد. لا أحد يعرف لماذا. هذا هو الذي كان يقال. الأمل هو الذي يجعلنا نستمر. لا أحد يعرف من أين جاء. الذي لا يعرف كيف يقول لا. الذي لا يعرف كيف يقول لا. الذي لا يعرف كيف يقول لا.
2. جاء من أقصى الشمال. الذي لا يعرف كيف يقول لا. الذي لا يعرف كيف يقول لا. الذي لا يعرف كيف يقول لا

LETTER 22

1. Do not grieve because of me: that light of my eyes, which sometimes is not there because of my sins, has begun to show the beauty of its rays. By grace has my Lord has altered the manner of my distress while not considering the level of my deeds? God forbid! And He has not dealt with me in this way and nor will He do so. But constantly He has mixed his sweetness with my bitterness. Because we may not receive from Him and rejoice greatly without drinking from this bitterness and grieving, and without suffering and without seeking continual rest.
2. Only he is wise who knows the wishes of his Lord. But let the solitary embrace single-mindedly what is his own, even if at certain times he is dispersed by occasional happenings.[1] We are, my brothers, in a world of contingencies. Let us guard our eyes, our ears, our belly, our desiring, and our anger, because these things deprive us of the holy light. Especially, let us muzzle our tongue, the raving dog: it changes the living into fetid corpses.
3. Do not seek questions and answers among a large group, even if these seem to be profitable, because either they chill our fervor or others are pricked with envy. Rather let us hold our tongue in silence and let our heart be moved by our craft—one more pleasing to the Father[2] than that which is accomplished in accordance with the law on the mountain or again in Jerusalem.[3] We are not able to do this except in the calm harbor of silence which gladdens those who attain it.

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[1] Solitary (*îhîdâyâ*): "When someone attains these things by the grace of Christ he acquires unity with himself and with the One who restores him (var. unites him), the bodily functions being united with the impulses of the soul, and the things of the soul with the mind; while the mind is expanded incomprehensibly in unity with the knowledge of God and it sees the Glory of the Lord face to face, and shines in like manner, and is transformed into it." See Discourse 9, "On guarding the senses," Vat. 124, 320b–324a. See also Letter 4.7.

[2] cf. Jn. 4:23.

[3] cf. Jn. 4:21.

وحصتها عاتلاه.

1. لا بسه ملحلحه. ىوءوا وحتب هه حرح لا هوا
   .ىوهمتكا لماله اهشه نغه :ىوقلب للهه باحه
   الهوهحه غاز لا نه ح. صحلحه نغه حفسه الهحه لبحه
   لل .غوحهب للاه لهوه باحه نحهب للا هه. سه :بقحه
   ح لبحه للهه. ىقنهه ماهحسه لحنه هسهاه
   للوه .سبه ححه مه الهبه بححه :ىوغه هسه هبهه
   ىلحه نسا اهسا؛

2. لبسه مغه .هغه متحه ىبغه غهحه ىه لهمضه
   مه غوحفلا الهحه لها حا .هحبحه مهغه لغبسه
   غوغه :تنه حلغا لقبحه لهححه .ىلهاه لغا لقبحه
   للهه .لهسهه لحنهه هعغهه حتاوله حتحه
   حهلك مهحبه نغله .لهبه ىوءوا مه ح ححتج سوغه
   حححا فهغ: ىهغا لهحقح تتا حهوهه لهه :ىغهتها؛

3. ححه للاا .لهجا لا الته هبه لقحلح نهوهه للاهلا
   هَ :سلغ مه حهغهه ح هَغ للهه .لتاله حغبحهه
   ححه :اهلهحه حهح غهبله لل .حغبحهلا لهسهسا لتتا
   غوهلحه ىه مه احا :لحا لبهسغ لهسهاه ىبالا
   ح بحه .لححهلهه لغاهوهه هحهغهاه حهله
   لهنه لهلهه بسا هلهححه لل :ىوحه هههغه
   حهسحه؛

LETTER 23

1. After my coming from being with you, the Prince brought all his wicked retinue against me with those who obey him as his viceroys. And if the mercy of Him who desires life for all[1] had not been poured forth over my wretchedness, my soul would have stood at the gate of destruction at that very moment. But when the stumbling-blocks of these two disorderly kinds of spirits prevailed,[2] the light of your prayer shone on me in my sad shape. And by means of the words on your tongue, the Paraclete spoke to me; you drew me and brought me into that place preserved from alien feet.
2. Understand how our mysterious meeting came to pass. Behold from that moment, what things beyond speech and beyond telling shone on my unworthy self, such that the intellect carefully lays hold of the soul, lest from joy and love of these things she abandon her harp[3] to flee towards them!

[1] 2 Peter 3:9.

[2] Beulay suggests that here spirits are intended, that is, demons and also persons who are the deputies of the devil.

[3] Evag., Cent. 4:62, the body as instrument of the soul.

٧

تمارين وأسئلة

١. ما الفرق بين الجملة الاسمية والجملة الفعلية؟ اذكر مثالين لكل منهما.

٢. ما الفرق بين الجملة الاسمية والجملة الفعلية؟ اذكر مثالين لكل منهما.

LETTER 24

1. My brother, keep your intellect motionless and marvel at God's love for us! While He performed all of his Economy such as the coming of his Son and his death for the redemption of our lives, and He laid down commandments for us by which we should adorn ourselves with good deeds and live: He did these things to help us and to honor us. What is in this for Him? Though you have seen the profusion of the mercies of the Good One, and more adorable than all, our God, He considers it as a favor done to Him that when we have accomplished these things which give us life, and bring us close to commingling with Him, we are brought near to Life.
2. Oh, how marvelous is your mercy, O our God, and the one who has felt it is inflamed and his heart burns continually to fly from this world abounding in misery. Alas! Alas to you, world of so many accidents! Blessed is the one who hates you, although he is not hated. Your enemies are the friends of the Beloved and your friends are loathed by his servants.[1] O my Father and my Nurturer, cut the course of my life from the world because desire mixed with the confidence to come to You will prepare this. Also for this You have placed me here, that I might gain this from the world. May your love, my Lord, cause me to be loosened from the world without resistance, and may pains and disease not constrain me to go out from it involuntarily. Because the one whose intellect is set free from it, the angels compel to remain in the world until his time comes. And the one who is ensnared by it, they lead from the world in torment and afflictions. How pleasant is the departure of your friends to You, O Good One! But how hard is the setting out from the world for all its own, because your friends depart towards their inheritance and these are deprived of what is theirs.

[1] Servants (*mšâmšanê*).

ح

حدائق حيوانية

1. أنشأ الملك صاحب جاه الكبير حديقة حيوانية في مدينة عاصمة مملكته الواسعة. وكان يحب الحيوانات ويريد أن يجمع فيها: منها الأليف ومنها المتوحش الكاسر. وكان يحب الطاووس لجماله، ويحب الببغاء لأنه يقلد الكلام، ويحب الأسد لشجاعته. وكان يحب الحمام لأنه يحمل الرسائل. وكان يحب الحمار لأنه يحمل الأثقال. وكان يحب الحمار الوحشي لأنه يعدو بسرعة. وكان يحب الحمار الأهلي لأنه يطيع صاحبه. وكان يحب الحمار الذي يحمل الماء لأنه يسقي الناس. وكان يحب الحمار الذي يحمل الحطب لأنه يوقد النار. وكان يحب الحمار الذي يحمل الرمل لأنه يصلح الطرق. وكان يحب الحمار الذي يحمل الحجارة لأنه يبني البيوت. وكان يحب الحمار الذي يحمل الأثقال لأنه يساعد الناس. وكان يحب الحمار الذي يحمل الأثقال لأنه يساعد الناس. وكان يحب الحمار الذي يحمل الأثقال لأنه يساعد الناس.

LETTER 25

[On the incomprehensibility[1] of God]

1. You asked me, my brother, how God is wholly in every place while not being limited by the place. According to what has been given to me by the grace of Christ my Fashioner,[2] with the help of your prayer, listen while I show you a little example about the true inwardness of the mystical meaning of the almighty Power, as much as the infirmity of my mind is able, being unworthy of such things.
2. Consider, my brother, while watching intelligently, how all the natures of the universe are filled with fire, and how this is hidden in them without visible activity, while it is in every place and appears totally everywhere though not being limited. The fire is hidden in a little pebble where it is invisible; also with it are the powers united to its nature. But if someone wants to make it go out, it may show itself a little and go out, while remaining in the pebble without being diminished. But if you give it scope, it will burn many dense forests, mountains, deserts, and everything which is suitable for burning. Then the power of all its nature will be made manifest and how it is hidden in a small and imperfect body with the flashes of its radiance and its warmth. It is not found in a limited way here, but completely with its power, in the strength of its totality, without limitation of this totality. Indeed its totality is not diminished but shows itself in the gathering of all the intensity of its activity, hidden here in worthless and imperfect bodies. From these it is seen by us to be totally in every place, while not being limited by any place.

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[1] Incomprehensibility (*lâ métdarkânûtâ*): perhaps of all the East Syrian writers John is closest to this concept of Pseudo-Dionysius which comes to him also through Gregory of Nyssa: "For leaving behind everything that is observed, not only what sense comprehends but also what the intelligence thinks it sees, it keeps on penetrating deeper until by the intelligence's yearning for understanding, it gains access to the invisible and the incomprehensible, and there it sees God." See *Gregory of Nyssa, Life of Moses*, tr. A. J. Malherbe and E. Ferguson (CWS 163, 1978), 95. See also Evag., Cent. 2:11.

[2] Christ the Fashioner, from the root *gebal*. On Christ as creator in Ephrem, see the note to Letter 5 and the work of Shemunkasho.

٥٥

وحصتم مسقه حلا لا مكوحناه والحاا.

1. وغلحلس اس: وامحا ا٤ومكا امحاو حكه حصحبه: مكحناه حد ٨حصوو امحا. مبكهس لا مهه ح حبه لا مهكبس وهمسا ٨حصكا ح ٨حسكا. مهم: ٣لحكو قووحه حد حصحبح اسمهس احوحا ا٤وحا. ٣مهنا: حلا حهصكا ٨حصكا ٤ومكا ا٤وحا. حلا ببس اللس ا٤ووكو ٨حصكا ٤ومكا ا٤وحا. امحا وهقصا مسبحا٤حسبحا مهم لا هحه ا٤حا حلا ٣ومكا ٨حصكا ٤ومكا ا٤وحا.
2. ٨حصكا ٤ومكا ا٤وحا. ٨حاكحصهقه ٨ا ٤ولا ح اس ا٤حضا حصحبه ٤ومكا ٨حصكا ٤ومكا ا٤وحا. ٨حصكا ٤ومكا ا٤وحا. ٨حصكا ٤ومكا ا٤وحا.

3. See, my brother, how through a little pebble you may teach yourself concerning that glorious Nature which is completely hidden in every place while not contained by any place. Consider, my brother, this simile intellectually with a gaze which goes beyond all and enters within all: a look which takes away all which is in front of it and is in the middle of the light. Concerning the glorious and most blessed Nature which has created all and dwells in all without limits, being completely in every place while all the worlds together do not limit it, listen to what the Word says about this ineffable Nature: "He dwells in his saints."[3] And in each of them He dwells totally with reflections of light from his bosom, his ineffable powers; there He activates and shows forth all his power without being limited. Oh, what should I say here! Astonishment has interrupted my mind in its course; my hand has grown weak and the pen has fallen from it: He keeps me back from what my will prepared while indicating to me that silence is fitting here.
4. Incline your grace to me, O Good One, that I may speak about your Greatness as much as You permit it, even if it not correspond to your gift of mental vision. For, behold, the wonder and the marvel at the moment of amazement do not allow going out into the world of shadow. Glory to You, who while You are wholly in every place, You contain all and are not contained by anything! You dwell by your grace in the rational being, your friend, and You manifest in him all your glory, all your power and all your understanding. But neither your Nature, nor your glory, nor your understanding, nor your almighty power that gives life to all, are bound by anything or in anything while the beauty of your glory confirms in amazement the worlds of your Holiness, and in drunkenness it silences their stirrings and unites them with itself.

[3] cf. Jn. 14:23.

3. ܒܪܐ ܐܢܬ ܠܐ ܕܥܒܕ ܐܝܬܝ ܚܪܡ ܘܡ ܐܢܐ ܗܘ ܕܐܡ ܠܐ ܐܬܝ ܠܘ

5. As it is up to Him now to give you a sign in secret so as to understand, He has not granted me who am completely impure to go any further, keeping me from the presumption of doing my will. But even from these things you may learn those which are not to be spoken.

5. ⵜⵎⵎⴰ ⵏⵜⵜⴰ ⵙⵉ ⵣⵎⵔⴰ ⵜⵜⵓⵔⵉ ⵜⵉⵖⵉⵔⵜ ⵜⵓⵔⵉ ⵏⵙⴰ ⵏⵜⵜⴰ. ⵙⵉ ⵡⵎⴰⵍ ⵜⵉⵔⵉ ⵙⵉ ⵓⵖⵓ ⵙⵉ ⵓⵔⵔⵓⵔ: ⵢⵉ ⵓⵖⵓⵔ ⵖⵔ ⵜⵉⵖⵉⵔⵜ ⵏⵏⴰⵙ ⵖⵔ ⵜⵉⵣⵉ ⵏⵜⵜⴰ. ⵍⵍⴰ ⴰⵔ ⵖⵔ ⵜⵉⵔⵉ ⵙⵉ ⵍⴰ ⵙⵉ ⵜⴰⵎⵎⵓⵔⵜ ⵍⵍⴰ ⵜⵉⵔⵉ ⵙⵉ ⵍⴰ ⵜⵉⵔⵉ ⵍⵍⴰ ⵜⵉⵎⵎⵓⵔⵜ

LETTER 26

1. That you asked me to instruct you about what is yours makes me very ashamed, even if it is said: "*The shameful are not at all ashamed.*"[1] But then these things which you desire will be revealed and before very long. If a place is cleared, the trees suck in much rain but the fruit comes in its own time. The farmer is always eager for the grain to ripen but the gathering of the harvest is at a fixed time. A father wishes complete growth for his sons in a day, if it were possible. But the order of nature is not disturbed by earnest desire.
2. So then, let summer precede you and you will eat heavenly fruits; let winter go by and you will see the Tree of Life blossom in the midst of your Paradise,[2] and when you eat from it you will never die.[3] For many times I see it begin to bud and it is beaten with hail while I hear the moving of unnatural[4] breezes.
3. Certainly, if we seek God, He reveals Himself to us. But take heed of this: if He reveals Himself, then He is within and is concealed. Uncover the veil that He may be shown. Lift the curtain that He may appear. He seeks a place where He may manifest his beauty: how great is his desire to be seen! By our earnest desire the place is cleared; the joys of summer come to us by waiting. In short, all things come in their own time, little by little, according to nature's growth. So also it is for the sons of God themselves. To Him be glory and may He make us partakers in the heritage of his Beloved.[5] Amen.

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[1] Jer. 6:15; 8:12.

[2] cf. Gen. 2:8; for tree of life within the soul, see also Letters 39.3; 51.2.

[3] cf. Jn. 6:50.

[4] Unnatural here refers to what is outside of nature, i.e., the passions. They are exterior to the nature of the soul as it has been created. What is above its nature is the contemplation of the Trinity. Isaac discusses these aspects of the life of the soul at length in Discourse 3, see my *St. Isaac of Nineveh, On the Ascetical Life* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1989). See É. Khalifé-Hachem, "La prière pure." Abba Isaiah also speaks of what is natural and unnatural concerning the soul, see Chryssavgis, *Abba Isaiah*, Discourse 2.

[5] cf. Rom. 8:17.

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LETTER 27

1. I know the Father in his Christ, but the Son I perceive through the Spirit. For outside of Him I have neither stability, nor movement, nor life, nor sensation. And when I am consumed by wonder, I see Them as one lamp and by its reflection I am illumined.[1] Therefore I marvel at myself and rejoice spiritually that the Source of Life be found in me. This is the summing up of the incorporeal world.
2. The wise man is not able to give an explanation of this. Glory to Him who makes wise his own by what is his own and reveals his beauty to the delight of those who love Him!

[1] See Macarius 15.38. See also Letter 39.6.

ح

وحصتم معتد.

1. انا وم للحا حمحسه نبد انا. حجزا وم حب وهسا نرا انا. اهلا ـــز انا حد حجز حده فمحا ماحا معتا ه ـــوز. ماحصحد انا حدجلحا وحه. حجحجم نب حمحمزا نرا انا. ماحسلا مزلحبحاه انا سحلزحه انا حد انا ـــححاه. انا وهسا انا وهزه انا هزل. ـــلسا وحه. حبحب حد بحدا وستا. ـــحمحا للا حدحجا وحمحا هده.
2. ماهحا وم وبحجا نحمحا حماحا لا محجحه. ماحسا حجزه وحسحم حبحجه. ماجحبه حجبحه. ـــلا ماوفزه حجوهحم وتحمحاه.

LETTER 28

1. What have I to write to you, O my most beloved, O servant, O laborer? What is mine cannot be written down lest he be visible to the pure only in the mirror of words.[1] May He give Himself in a vision in your heart,[2] now and forever, and may you become crazed with love for Him and may you be inflamed by his beauty.
2. Now then, O you who are weary and vexed by the service of your Lord, place your head on the knees of your Lord and refresh yourself. Fling yourself on his breast[3] and inhale the Spirit of Life so that Life be mingled with your substance. Lean on Him for He is your Table and be nourished at it by His Father.[4] Purify your mirror and without hesitation the unique Light will be made manifest to you in a triune way. Take this to heart and you will perceive that your God lives.[5]

[1] Matt. 5:8.
[2] The vision of God, his Glory, is seen in the mirror of the soul.
[3] cf. Jn. 13:23.
[4] cf. Evag., Cent. II: 60.
[5] cf. 1 Kings 17:1; 18:10.

حس

وحصتم ملقلا.

1. مما لما حب حصنا ءا :حب حملحأ حب لما لمه حلا: لتحب للقا لمالمسحمو. لحلحا لا حبو لمه. لسحف لحجا حسحف مه ملا للا. لمالحا وسحسو لمه للسا حبحب حب هو للا. لمالحا وسحسو لمه للسا حبحب حب هو للا. لمالحا وسحسو لمه للسا حبحب حب هو

LETTER 29

1. You are, O man, an image of God.[1] Do you wish the image to take on the likeness of the Original?[2] Silence within you all activities whatsoever. Bear continually in your heart the yoke of Our Lord. Marvel at this greatness in your mind, until it become radiant with his glory and be transformed into the Archetype[3] and you become a god in God, having obtained the image of your Creator by the union which likens to Him.
2. As to the fire of your Lord, He Himself has suppressed its flame in you, so that He might teach you the harm of being scattered. When this notion is strong in you, then He will rekindle his flame in you, and your heart will become warm and your flesh will be inflamed with its heat. For the fire has not gone out but lies dormant as an occasion of correction.

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[1] cf. Gen. 1:26, 27; image of God (*salmâ*): on John's distinction between the image of God in which man is created and the divine resemblance (*dumyâ*, *demûtâ*) received at baptism, see Beulay, ES, 481–485. Man as image of God is central to the thinking of Narsai. See the many examples in *Homélies de Narsai sur la Création*, ed. and trans. P. Gignoux (PO 34, 1968), fasc. 3–4. See also F. G. McLeod, "Man as the image of God: its meaning and theological significance in Narsai," *TS* 42 (1981): 458–468. The distinction in this Letter between image and likeness may be due to Evagrian influence, see Gnostikos, 151 in J. Lemaitre, "Contemplation," *DSpir* 2 (1937): 1783. Gregory of Nyssa saw the image as already having the fullness of the resemblance; see J. Daniélou, *Platonisme et théologie mystique* (Paris: 1953), 48. Nor, according to Beulay, do Macarius or Pseudo-Dionysius make this distinction; see Beulay, ES, 483. On other references to this issue, see J. Kirchmeyer, "Grecque (Église)," *DSpir* 6 (1967): 813–22.

[2] cf. Col. 1:15, Christ the image of God, *demûtâ dalâhâ*.

[3] The transformation of man's resemblance into the divine resemblance is a transformation into Christ by means of grace, see Letter 2.6.

ھ

وجهتي مقلة.

1. لمحي حبيب لا لحز. لعنت ٥٤ لاهلي سلما لمحي لمحي لاصلي: لمحلي مختصه لحلا حي هلف: لمعلي لمصي حلاحي: سصصه هلاحيز لغلاه حكحي ينمي مينه حيلاه حامنبه. هذ حكسلعنه: مصحصه لاوزي لمحت. لاهمحي: مزحخي لمصي لنه لاحلت لاهلا لاغلاه: حسبه لاحصهنه لاهسبه ٭حه

2. لنصا حكعني. هذلاحي حي هلف مغه: ينمي مزمه لعفحي. لاهلاحي. ومي لنعت لنا حي ينعي لمحا: لنصا حي هكي سبه: لاهلاحي حه. هذاحصه سلم ينهصه. حكحي سسم هذاحلاحه ٭لزغلاه لحصح لاهلا لا. لاحج لسعه ينحي

LETTER 30

1. I read your letter and I am filled with intolerable suffering. All my body, with my soul, is joined to the momentary affliction.[1]
2. By the strength of my God, I did not suffer grievously. But I have faith that by means of the sprinkling which is from my heaven, I may water my Lord's field, and the desirable and splendid seed of life will appear in it.[2] I will always make of the sprinkling an inundation in which the enemies will be drowned.
3. Therefore the Lord lives, for you will never again pass a whole day without God. He hears those who are broken-hearted,[3] so then for me laments will increase, but for you a variety of consolations in the beloved Child who is formed in a Pauline way.[4]

[1] 2 Cor. 4:17.

[2] This would seem to refer to the water of tears distilled from his heart by his suffering.

[3] Ps. 34:18.

[4] Gal. 4:19; here John speaks of spiritual birth in another, engendered by the sufferings of a solitary as a dimension of his universal love. See Beulay, ES, 375–77. Compare with Symeon the New Theologian and his ideas on spiritual birth. See S. P. Brock, "Mary and the Eucharist," *Sobornost/ECR* 1:2 (1979): 58–59.

١١

التمارين

1. اشرح الفرق بين الاستدلال الاستقرائي والاستدلال الاستنباطي. وبيّن أيهما أقوى في رأيك ولماذا.
2. لا يقبل العلم الحديث أن تكون الأرض مسطحة. وهذا يعني أن جميع الناس كانوا مخطئين في هذا الأمر حتى عهد قريب. وهذا يعني أيضًا أن الحقيقة العلمية ليست ثابتة. وإنما هي عرضة للتغيير والتعديل.
3. يعتقد بعض الناس أن الله موجود لأن الكتاب المقدس يقول ذلك. وهذا يعني أن الكتاب المقدس صحيح لأنه كلام الله. وهذا يسمى الاستدلال الدائري. اشرح لماذا يعتبر هذا النوع من الاستدلال خاطئًا.

LETTER 31

1. O servant who labors, I never weary of stirring you up at all times with my inept words: "Love your Lord, I beg of you!" And so it will be until your soul is completely bathed in his delight and forgets itself and perceives itself to be a child of the Father.
2. For He said: *That they may be one in us.*[1] Glory to You, uniting those who love Him, that they may be one with Him in his Father. When I remember your love in those who love You and theirs in You, O Life of every world, the limbs of my body are disjointed by its force and the flow of my writing ceases. Truly, my Lord, through you I speak what is yours to those who are yours—and may I be considered as without reproach in this.
3. O servant, who has exchanged his servitude for the sonship of the Lord of the worlds, strengthen your soul a little since evening draws nigh for the end of your work. Fix your eyes within yourself a little that his gladdening radiance may shine out in you, and this especially at the time when you fall down on your face in prayer: there is no time like this for the vision of the One who sees all. Here He reveals Himself to those who love Him and He delights them.

[1] 1 Jn. 17:21.

لا

.ابنه حلحلا

1. لسفا ابجا ءا ااغفلها ىلحبه ىحيزا حرحصو لا ماذه لا. ىس انا لحا ىغمحا سنا. حا انا صعبو ىلغا :ءاغنا لحلغا :ءاءاسءه ىحلزا هكه ىعصو ءاجا ءاجب هكه ىه ءاحاو.
2. :ىءاهضتو انبشه ىحا لسحهه. ح نه ىههنو غمأ :ىءاهضتو انبشه ىحا لسحهه. ح نه ىههنو غمأ ىلهسغتا نيح ح. ىءاحاح نه هعمه ىههنو :ىحكه لحو ننا ءا. انا ينهه حا ىءاكنوه سعسغتو لقهه غنغمه. هغهجه حه ىعهفلهه نيحه هقوه انو. انا لللهه ىكنو ىكبك نغه حا حا. لللخ ىعبلل حه ىكبك.
3. ىهس :انحكه لغمه انهغه هاوجكه هكنو ابجا ءا ىعصو انا ىز. ىلاحكفه ىكههجو انهغ نغنو لللكف ىعصو حا ىكله ابنه ابهه. انبشه انسغ حا سنبو لللكه ىعصو انحاه غ

4. The one who looks with greed is not satisfied. The one who seeks his Lord outside of himself, gains no profit. But the soul who solemnly escorts the Son of his Lord[2] within itself, the excitement of its praise is silenced only by the wonder at his beauty. This is the soul who has drunk the mixture of his sweetness and is mingled with Him and He with it. This is the soul who always breathes the sweet fragrance of its Beloved. This is the soul who cries out shamelessly: *Who can separate me from You?*[3] To this soul He manifests his servants,[4] and they encourage it to chant with them their "Holy, Holy, Holy."[5]
5. But you say: "Be quiet, do not torment me with things such as these!" So I, as you have spoken, keep silent.

[2] cf. Ps. 118.26; Matt. 21:9, 15; 23:39; Lk. 2:14.

[3] Rom. 8:35.

[4] Servants (*mšâmšanê*), ministering angels.

[5] In Letter 4.5 John has already spoken of the soul's fellowship with the angels and being mixed (from *hlt*) with them as kindred. The final stage of this relationship is no longer the soul's perception of angels (see Letter 19.6), but rather being united with them by resemblance to them, and thus they unite in a common "Sanctus" before the vision of God. Here there may be Evagrian influence, according to Beulay, in identifying the human intellect with that of the angelic one. See Beulay, ES*,* 363–368.

4. وبنا سحنا لا تحمد. وحمدنا محمد حتى منه لا تحصى ولا تعد. ونشهد أن لا إله إلا الله وحده لا شريك له شهادة تبقى بها ألسنتنا وتدوم بها أذكارنا. ونشهد أن محمدا عبده ورسوله أرسله بالحق بشيرا ونذيرا وداعيا إلى الله بإذنه وسراجا منيرا.
5. أما بعد فإن الله تعالى لا يحب كل مختال فخور. ولا يرضى لعباده الكفر ولا يأمر بالفحشاء.

LETTER 32

[On the temptations which seized him and on affliction of the soul]

1. I beseech you, help me in prayer. The demons have prepared a temptation for me, the account of which terrifies those who hear of it. Nor is it right to commit it to writing, lest the heart of those who hear of it be troubled, and these wretched ones be strengthened. Their loathsome forms are shown to me in the flesh and they wish, miserable as I am, to burn my eyes and consume them in their fire. And when I am indignant with them[1] in the strength of Our Lord, they are defeated, but again they boldly return, showing their cruelty towards me and threatening me. But when I make the sign of the cross[2] of our Life before them, they return to the darkness, their portion, their fire quenched. Remember what happened to the valiant Mar Anthony, yet that was more spiritual than this. The fiery ones were with him because of his diligence, but they are with me because of my weakness and cowardice and because of my innumerable sins.
2. Take heed that no man see or hear these things besides yourself and your friend. And do not grieve about them. Only pray to your Lord that He give me strength. Let us cast our anxiety on the Lord[3] and in Him we will persevere. I constantly give Him things more numerous, more overpowering, and more cruel to bear than these.

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[1] To be indignant with demons, to actually respond to them, comes out of the Evagrian tradition. Specifically in his *Antirrheticos*, but also in the *Pratikos*, Evagrius instructs to confront demons without fear and even with anger. See A. & C. Guillaumont, "Démon," *DSpir* 3 (1957): 189–212, esp. 196–205.

[2] Together with the antirrhetic method and the remembrance of God (*ʿuhdânâ dalâhâ*), the sign of the Cross is an important weapon against demons. See John's Discourse 3: "Sometimes when I am kissing the cross there shines from it upon my face a star of glorious and wondrous brightness, and my heart rejoices; and when I stretch out my hand and put it before me in the air or on my body I see it established in the likeness of an ineffable light. At the marvelous sight gladness is stirred up in my heart such as I have no strength in me to endure before it. … The devils stand in great distress every time this is done before them, as I have seen their anguish from it many times and have praised the Lord." See Discourse 3, "On the demon of fornication," Vat. 124, 286 a–b.

[3] cf. Ps. 55:22.

٥٤

وإحلال مكانه بعد إخراجه بالقوة. انظر: مكان.

1. أخذ أن يأخذ الشيء. الأخذ بقوة من أن أخذ: أخذ بالقوة من يده. وأخذ الله بذنبه: عاقبه. أخذه بالقوة: حمله على الذهاب معه. أخذ الشيء: تناوله. أخذ الشيء من مكانه: نقله. أخذ أن حدوث شيء. أخذ في الشيء: بدأ. أخذ من الشيء: قطع. أخذ من الشيء: أخذ بعضه. أخذ من الشيء: أخذ منه. أخذ الشيء: أخذ أن يحدث. أخذ الشيء: أخذ أن يحدث. أخذ الشيء: أخذ أن يحدث

LETTER 33

[On the subject of temptations[1]]

1. Since your going away from me, my wounds are so many that my soul continually expects to pass on, and why this is, I do not know. Because of my many sins, my trials have also multiplied and gone over my head, so that while I sleep or when I am awake, the Rebels gather dragons and scorpions and bring them upon me in endless numbers, besides innumerable hidden and manifest torments which they personally inflict on me. In the midst of these things, my guilty soul has no hope except the hidden Will of the Creator.[2] But herein is known the abundance of his ineffable grace.
2. My brother, ask Our Lord to give me the strength to endure the sufferings which my sins have prepared for me. And besides yourself, let no one else see these things lest the Guardian of my life be angered with me and remove himself from me; and I die cruelly at the hands of my enemies. Do not be overly grieved because the right hand of the Lord sustains, brings strength and consoles in the midst of these things.

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[1] For analysis of kinds of temptations (*néšyonê*), typical of East Syrian mystics, see Alfeyev, *Spiritual World of Isaac*, 91–100, with ample quotes from Isaac: "If the diver found a pearl in every oyster then everyone would quickly become rich! And if he brought one up the moment he dove, without waves beating against him, without any sharks encountering him, without having to hold his breath until he nearly expires, without being deprived of the clear air which is granted to everyone, and having to descend to the abyss—if all of this were the case, pearls would come more thick and fast than lightning flashes." And perceptively Isaac also describes how if one asks God to take away a temptation, he will, but the gift intended will be withheld as well.

[2] Hidden Will (*rémzâ kasyâ*) occurs in Isaac; see Brock, *Isaac of Nineveh*, ch. 9.6. The phrase is very common in Narsai; see Alwan, "Remzō," 91–106. See also P. Gignoux, "Les doctrines eschatologiques de Narsai," *OS* 11 (1966): 351–352; 461–488.

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وإلحاق علامة التأنيث به حتى يطابق ما بعده.

1. مع جمع التكسير: تعد كلمة مع جمع التكسير التي تدل على أقل من ثلاثة أو أكثر من عشرة. وهذه الصفة تشبه في ذلك كلمة بعض التي تعني جزءًا من كل. وتستخدم مع جمع التكسير لتحديد عدد الأشياء التي يتم الحديث عنها. على سبيل المثال، يمكن القول "مع الرجال ثلاثة" أو "مع النساء خمس". وتستخدم أيضًا للإشارة إلى مجموعة من الأشياء التي تشترك في صفة معينة. على سبيل المثال، يمكن القول "مع الطلاب المجتهدين".
2. مع اسم الجنس: وتأتي مع اسم الجنس للإشارة إلى مجموعة من الأشخاص أو الأشياء التي تنتمي إلى نفس الجنس. على سبيل المثال، يمكن القول "مع الأطباء" للإشارة إلى مجموعة من الأطباء الذين يعملون في نفس المستشفى. وبالمثل، يمكن القول "مع الطالبات" للإشارة إلى مجموعة من الطالبات اللواتي يدرسن في نفس الفصل.

LETTER 34

1. Whoever seeks to speak of the love of God proclaims his ignorance because he has not perceived that it is utterly impossible to do so. I marvel at the wisdom of our Creator, how He binds the soul to the body lest it fly from it at the time of these graces when it is immersed in the desire of Him; yet the soul forgets and leaves its body alive but without impulse or sensation for a long time, then it again returns and provides all that is necessary to the body to remain alive. And when I, wretched and feeble as I am, see how words and images are as far from showing the truth as one standing on the earth and looking on heaven is far from touching it, I ask that I not be bothered again with the worry of these things.
2. Yet I call blessed whoever receives the experience of the divine mysteries in himself. There are two things whose sweetness cannot be endured: these are love and joy. Love slays and mortifies the intellect's stirrings with amazement. And joy awakens and resuscitates its fiery movements. Regarding this sweetness, not even the spiritual beings can make known its greatness. Likewise the holy breath which is mingled with the spiritual beings, and with which they are united, who can speak of it? Its fragrance, its peacefulness and the delight from it are unspeakable, even in the tongue of angels. The body and the soul together enjoy all of this, although only the intellect is the host of its perception: *Whether in the body or not, I do not know*, says the experienced one.[1]

[1] 2 Cor. 12:2–3.

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٢٠ تمرين

١. ما هي الأسباب التي تجعل الناس يتكلمون بلغات مختلفة؟ هل تعتقد أن هذا الاختلاف سيستمر إلى الأبد، أم أن هناك احتمالاً لأن تتكلم البشرية كلها لغة واحدة في المستقبل؟ ناقش ذلك مع زملائك.

٢. تخيل أنك تعيش في عالم لا توجد فيه أي لغة مكتوبة. كيف ستتواصل مع الآخرين؟ كيف ستنقل المعرفة من جيل إلى جيل؟ ما هي المشكلات التي ستواجهها؟ اكتب فقرة تصف فيها هذا العالم.

3. Woe to me, who always delight my soul in hearing these things from the mouths of those who are accustomed to them, while I am deprived and empty of their sweet savor. My God, grant me to announce what is yours from my own experience and not just repeat what I hear. They say that in the intoxication of these things, if the members of the body did not succumb while the person lays prostrate on his face, he would remain there until his soul departs from him, forgetting the necessities of life. But he draws his soul away from its realm, to these things of the body on account of the severe dryness of its members.

3. ⵏⵜ ⵜⵜ ⵙⵜⵜⵏ ⵜⵜⵜⵜ ⵜⵜⵜⵜⵜ ⵙⵜⵜⵜ ⵜⵜ ⵜⵜⵜⵜⵜ ⵜⵜⵜⵜⵜ ⵜⵜⵜ

LETTER 35

[On the hour of death]

1. My brother, you wrote to me: "Perhaps your final departure will occur and I will be afflicted." If this happens, do not be sad for this is truly my expectation and my earnest desire regarding my Lord: that in that hour no one but He be there to help me and to close my eyes; and that when I lay prostrate on my face, I may attain to this with desire for Him. Many times this hour is nearer to me than that which gives joy or that which grieves.
2. As to what you have asked me, I am ashamed to write to you. May the Lord grant me to be really what you suppose about me! But until now I am no different from the hog which is tied by the widow in front of its stall: this is all which I resemble! And those who bring others down from the vault of heaven, from where will they bring me down? And what resemblance will they impute to me who am more vile than this? They themselves truly bear this likeness in all their actions. And this is their task which they accomplish, according to their inheritance, for any one who would listen to them.[1]

[1] The sense of this obscure passage may hinge on the distinction John makes between image (*salmâ*) and likeness (*dumyâ*); see Letter 29.1. And here John admits to not having accomplished this work of transformation begun at baptism whose goal is Christ, the image of God (*demûtâ dalâhâ*), whereas the saints invoked in prayer from the vault of heaven have done this work, as have those invoking them.

هد

.الهذ أحد لا حد هقسه ملحلو

1. وجلا حد لحلج: سا حد لحلج ،لحجلا لجيي مع سوءسا لحجلا: .لحجلهع لسوءس ح هيجي لحجلا ،سا حد لحلج

LETTER 36

1. To the one who has renewed himself, to him may be applied the simile of the guest of the tanner![1]
2. If in spite of your sun the night comes upon you, lament and increase your sighs until the Sun whose brightness is without limits shines forth in your place. He will compose pleasant hymns there, full of joy. I myself sang a sweet sounding hymn, my Beloved heard it and awoke from his sleep. He listened to it for it was sweeter to Him than all else. His sleep has fled and in eternal wakefulness He remains with me. He says to me while rejoicing: "Prolong your hymns and extend your chants! Open your doors and we will enter your inner rooms! And henceforth murmur in secret and put your enemies to shame, who while they are buffeted by your chant do not hear its sound."[2] I have a mystery! I have a mystery![3] I have a mystery together with my friends! For our pleasure is in ourselves, because our King is within us.
   Blessed are you O Zion, for you thirsted for the wine which gladdens all and became drunk. You have forgotten what is yours and you have become crazed by the inebriation of his love. In his light your eyes have become blind and your heart has become illumined with his beauty because in this beauty is hidden the Babe who brings forth all into his beautiful world.

[1] Acts 9:43; 10:6, 32.

[2] Evagrius, *Pratikos* # 47; see Bamberger, *Evagrius*, 29. Devils only perceive what is audible.

[3] Is. 24:16, Peshitta.

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3. How desirable and lovable You are, O Child! The desire of You takes souls captive. My soul has gone out after You and when it looks intently within itself your beauty appears there. It sees your image, O Image of your Father,[4] and in You it embraces him. How pleasing and lovable You are, O Like unto your Father! How sweet and pleasant You are! Your sweet savor is known only to those who experience You. I breathed your sweet fragrance and my heart was transported within me. Whoever would explain this is not able, but whoever has heard Simeon and also is united to the One who was his,[5] he will understand this. Whoever has walked in Simeon's footsteps will come after me and may we not depart from our way! I see you who denied at the door,[6] carrying in your bosom him who he briefly carried at his chest.[7] Whoever understands this will take refuge in silence. For the One who from within goes towards our inner rooms, our imprudent tongue makes Him run out the door.
4. Close your doors, Jerusalem, so that your Spouse might remain within you! Keep your windows closed to prolong the fragrance of his ointments![8] When your doors are opened and you look here and there, seeking Him in vain,[9] you will wet your cheeks with your tears but not find Him, or if you do find Him it will be with difficulty, not freely with love. Then guard the doors with caution lest what occurred before happen to you again.[10] Because if you do not do this, you will deliver Him into the hands of the insolent[11] and my own joy too will be changed into mourning. My friend, embrace what is yours and make supplication that what is mine may be also like yours.

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[4] Image of your Father, *demûtêh dabûk*, see Letter 29.

[5] cf. Lk. 2:28.

[6] Jn. 18:6.

[7] As in Letter 30.3, John may be speaking here of spiritual birth and the apparent paradox of a denier of Christ, Simon Peter (*Šem'un*), participating in this reality which John compares to the physical contact of Simeon (*Šem'un*) and Christ, see Lk. 2:28. Beulay interprets it in this way, although the text is problematic. See Beulay, ES, 475–81. On spiritual birth, see Brock, "Mary and the Eucharist," 58–59.

[8] cf. Cant.1:3.

[9] cf. Cant.3:2.

[10] cf. Jn. 19:17.

[11] cf. Matt. 26:45.

3. ما في الرسوم التي لا يعرفها الا الذين تعلموها. فان الكتابة
هي الرسم عن الكلام. وقد تعلم الصغار الكتابة
اسرع من الكبار. وذلك لان الكبار قد شغلوا
اذهانهم بالعلوم التي تخالف الرسوم. فلا يقدرون
ان يتعلموا الرسوم التي تخالف ما قد علموه
اولا. وهذه الرسوم التي نتكلم عنها. هي
تشبه الحروف التي نكتب بها. وهي ليست
بحروف. ولكنها اشكال تدل على الكلام.
كما تدل الحروف. ولكن الرسوم لا تعرف
الا عند الذين يعرفونها. وهي تختلف
باختلاف الامم. فكل امة لها رسوم
تخالف رسوم الامم الاخرى. ولكن
الرسوم التي تدل على الكلام
كالحروف.

4. الحروف تدل على الكلام. والكلام يدل على
الافكار. والافكار هي صور الاشياء التي
نعرفها. فالحروف تدل على الاشياء
بواسطة الكلام. والكلام هو الواسطة
التي بها نعرف الاشياء. فالحروف
تدل على الاشياء بواسطة الكلام.

5. Blessed is the one whose altar is within him[12] and the Holy of Holies is inside of him! There, he will hear the voice of God[13] which with one movement shakes and terrifies all of the Rebels. There he will see the thick darkness[14] of that many-splendored light. And in the cloud, the light will be hidden from every vision and from all the viewers.[15] This is the holy place wherein the Most Holy One sometimes becomes visible by the brightness of his flashes of lightning and sometimes conceals his appearance in the thick darkness of his glory in a vision[16] that is exalted above sight and knowledge.
6. When your heart has grown warm, look intently there. When your limbs become loosened in fervor, fall there on your face. And let it be your delight to cry out simply, Father! Father!,[17] rather than to multiply the tears of infants born of the Spirit. This is the freedom[18] of the perfect, those tears being alloyed involuntarily. And when psalmody is sweet for you, you are speechless and astonished when you look intently at your Sun who is shining unhindered in you and within your walls. This is the service which is preferred by *the One who has come to serve*.[19]
7. If you are empty of all virtue and the opposition is stirred up, pray this prayer secretly and incessantly: "My God, instruct me and strengthen me!" This suffices at every moment in this life because it appears as a sign in the heart to the Omniscient One: "Instruct me, my Lord, that I may know all your will and strengthen me that I may fulfill it. Instruct me that I may know the tricks of the demons and all that is adverse, and fortify me that I may conquer all of this." This comprehensive prayer of few words but great meaning, I have found to be more effective than every other.

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[12] On the interior liturgy and the altar of the heart, see Aphrahat, Demonstration 23:59. But especially in the Book of Steps 12.2, the image of the interior church of the heart is developed. See Kitchen, *Book of Steps*, 119–126. See also S. P. Brock, "The Spirituality of the Heart in Syrian Tradition," *Harp* 1 (1988): 93–115.

[13] cf. Num. 7:89.

[14] Ex. 20:21; thick darkness (*ʾarpellâ*), see Luibheid, *Pseudo-Dionysius*, Letter Five, 265.

[15] cf. Pseudo-Dionysius, *Mys. Theol.*, 1:3.

[16] Vision (*ḥézwâ*), see Pseudo-Dionysius, *Mys. Theol.*, 2:1.

[17] Rom. 8:15.

[18] Freedom (*pârêsiyâ*).

[19] Mk. 10:45.

5. ملكم معمعوقة معمده: مه مسحمه كمك معمحلم
سمه محمده. لمحلم معكم لمتم سعمد كماه: مده
مه لمعمه للمنم لمسم كماه: معكم لمعتمكم فمقمده
لمتم لم كمه لمم لم لمنمم مده: لمسق ملقم
لمسم حمم كمتمه معه مه: لمعه لمذا مه
ملمسم مسمحمه لمكمكم حمده: لمسلم معقمكمه
مشعل: لمحمه لمم كم مه مه لمعمه*

6. لمم مبه كحب: لمم ذم كمل: مه مبه لمم
لمحم كم لمم لم لمعم. مكمم لمم لمم كم
لمم لمعمه كحم مكمه مسلمحكمه كم مم: مسحب
لمعم كحم لمتم مسلمحكمه كم مم: مسحب
لمكحب م. لمعمل لمعمقله مبمه. لمعه كم مكتب
لمم معمل. لمعمه كحب لم مكمه لم مه لمم
لمعمل مسمه كم مم: مسحب لمعمل مسمه كم مم:
لم مسحب لمعمل مسمه كم مم: مسحب لمعمل مسمه*

7. لمم: مسلمم لمحمكمه: لمم معمه لمم لم مه مه
مسمحم معمل. معمم لمه لمسمه لمه لمكم
لمه لمعبه. لمتم كمكمه لمعمل مكمه لمه لمه
معمم مم لمعمه لمسمحم. لمعمكم لم مكتب لمكمه
معمم مسمحم. لمعمكم لمسمه: مكمه مسلم
لمعمم مسمه: مسمحمكم كمكمه لمعمم لمه
لمكمم. لمكمه لمكم لمه. لمعمحم لمكم لمه
لمسمه لمم لم مه مه. لمعمه لمم لم مه*

LETTER 37

[On the lack of consolation]

1. You have asked me about my condition and I do not know what to tell you because of the variations.[1] At times I am full of life and sometimes death roars against me in my limbs. At times I kill life and sometimes the dead kill me.[2] At times I am cut off from all in union with the One and sometimes I am mingled with all. And I greatly marvel at this, that the Spirit of Life permits change so that the dead might have power to oppress. But He does this as an admonition lest we eagerly breathe the odor of the dead.
2. You also ask me: "What is it that consoles you?" The trees of this mountain and of the Lord's mountain are enough for my consolation, so that I may fly from one to another until I find the Tree of Life[3] and I hide in it and take rest there. From its fruits we fill our granaries and our winepresses, and we take our food and our drink. Its shadow protects us from the heat and we find in it a place of protection from the intense cold. No ice is found in our place because He has kindled his fire within it. And night has no power over his light: He makes the beauty of his vision to shine and we have no need of the sun.[4] Our clothing is the garment which He borrowed from us for his covering,[5] and we do not need the wool of sheep.

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[1] Variations, changes (*šuhlâpê*), John describes what is meant by changes: afflictions, adversities, frequent sufferings, darkness of soul, depression, cold feelings, tumult, gloom, doubt, and despair of life. See Discourse 6, "On the visitations bestowed on solitaries," Vat. 124, 294 a–b. Abba Isaiah notes similar changes; see de Broc, *Abbé Isaïe*, Logos 24. Shem'on the Graceful makes the awareness of changes to be an essential part of a Solitary's life in the cell; see his "Discourse on the Consecration of the Cell" in Bettiolo, *Violenza e Grazia*, 134–169. See also A. Louf, "Introduction à Syméon de Taibouteh," *Collectanea Cisterciensia* 64 (2002): 30–33.

[2] Life: of the passions; dead: the demons.

[3] cf. Gen. 2:9; 3:22. See Tree of Life, Letter 39.3, 5.

[4] Apoc. 22:5; 21:23; Is. 60:19.

[5] Christ's human nature: on this exchange of garments, see Brock, "Robe of Glory," 251. See also Brock, "Clothing Metaphors."

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وكذلك جعلناكم أمة وسطا لتكونوا شهداء على الناس ويكون الرسول عليكم شهيدا. وما جعلنا القبلة التي كنت عليها إلا لنعلم من يتبع الرسول ممن ينقلب على عقبيه. وإن كانت لكبيرة إلا على الذين هدى الله. وما كان الله ليضيع إيمانكم. إن الله بالناس لرؤوف رحيم.

1. قد نرى تقلب وجهك في السماء فلنولينك قبلة ترضاها. فول وجهك شطر المسجد الحرام. وحيثما كنتم فولوا وجوهكم شطره. وإن الذين أوتوا الكتاب ليعلمون أنه الحق من ربهم. وما الله بغافل عما يعملون.
2. ولئن أتيت الذين أوتوا الكتاب بكل آية ما تبعوا قبلتك. وما أنت بتابع قبلتهم. وما بعضهم بتابع قبلة بعض. ولئن اتبعت أهواءهم من بعد ما جاءك من العلم إنك إذا لمن الظالمين. الذين آتيناهم الكتاب يعرفونه كما يعرفون أبناءهم. وإن فريقا منهم ليكتمون الحق وهم يعلمون. الحق من ربك فلا تكونن من الممترين.

3. And if his Spirit speaks within us, what use for us in conversations? If those who dwell in its branches (Tree of Life) and do not dwell on the land mingle with us, why would human fellowship of men be necessary for us? If for our delight, we breathe his fragrance with desire, who is able to force us to breathe the odor of foul lust? If our own soul flies to his bosom, and our own heart rejoices and exults at his appearance, who will bring back to us the memories of the sea which drowns those who swim in it, and the joy whose end is lamentation? Who has tasted the fruits of his sweetness and wants to steal the fruits of the slayer? Why do you suffer that we have not house, or shelter, or human company, or human things? Is it not better to be a dweller in the Builder of our house[6] and be in the custody of the Guardian of our city? And if there was not a resting place for David until he found Him,[7] how is it we seek repose outside of Him?
4. Those who eat the Bread of Life do not die[8] and those who drink of Him, from the inebriation of it, no longer remember what is theirs. In their drunkenness they have forgotten all their possessions. They are wounded and do not suffer. They do not eat and are not hungry. They do not drink and are not thirsty. They do not sleep and are not weary. They weep while rejoicing. They cry out while exulting. They die and are radiant because death shows them the face of their Lord and they do not remember the life ending in death.[9]
5. Considering for whose sake I write these things, my heart does not reprove me because my face is open towards the face of my Lord.

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[6] cf. Ps. 127:1.

[7] Ps. 132:4–5.

[8] cf. Jn. 6:50.

[9] Beulay notes that John only once uses the term impassibility (*lâ hâšôšûtâ*). But he describes it in various ways such as in this paragraph where it is a participation in the life after the resurrection and given only briefly in this life. It is the opposite of the *šuhlâpê* described above. The roots of impassibility and immutability lie in the Two Ages doctrine of Theodore of Mopsuestia. "What pleased God was to divide the Creation into two states: the one which is present, in which he made all things mutable; the other which is future, when he will renew all things and bring them to immutability." A quote from the Fifth General Council found in R. A. Norris, *Manhood and Christ* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), 161. The Two Ages doctrine is also basic to Cyrus of Edessa; see W. F. Macomber, "The Theological Synthesis of Cyrus of Edessa, an East Syrian Theologian of the Mid Sixth century," *OCP* 30 (1964): 5–38; 363–384.

3. ولا يوسف عليه السلام: حين أراد أن يتزوج. لا تحزن عليهم: حين أخذوا أخاه. ولا تكن في ضيق مما يمكرون: حين أرادوا قتله. ولا تحسبن أن ما أصابك لم يكن ليخطئك: وما أخطأك لم يكن ليصيبك. ولا تستبطئ الرزق: فإن الرزق مقسوم. ولا تطلب ما ضمن لك: وفرغ قلبك لما طلب منك. ولا تنس نصيبك من الدنيا: فإن الدنيا لا تدوم. ولا تثق بغير الله: فإن الخلق لا يملكون شيئا. ولا ترج إلا الله: فإن الرجاء لا يكون إلا منه. ولا تخش إلا ذنبك: فإن الذنب لا يغفر إلا بخشية الله. ولا تيأس من روح الله: فإن اليأس لا يكون إلا من الكافرين.

4. ولا تعجل بشيء قبل أوانه: فإن الأمور لا تجري إلا في أوقاتها. ولا تتكلف ما لا يعنيك: فإن التكلف لا يكون إلا بالتعب. ولا تتعب نفسك في طلب الدنيا: فإن الدنيا لا تطلب إلا بالتعب. ولا تتعرض للبلاء: فإن البلاء لا يدفع إلا بالصبر. ولا تتعرض للمعاصي: فإن المعاصي لا تكون إلا بالذنوب. ولا تتعرض للمخلوقين: فإن المخلوقين لا يملكون شيئا. ولا تتعرض للخالق: فإن الخالق لا يكون إلا بالطاعة.

5. ولا تتعرض للمخلوقين: فإن المخلوقين لا يملكون شيئا. ولا تتعرض للخالق: فإن الخالق لا يكون إلا بالطاعة.

LETTER 38

1. I know you, O strong man in the Lord, you hide your treasure and you beg from a poor man. Blessed is the one whose treasure is within him and who is not nourished from outside. Blessed is the one whose sun rises from within, blocking the powers of sight which perceive the external sun, powers which hinder those powers which perceive the interior sun. Blessed is the one whose hearing is closed to amusing sounds and he inclines to hear the stirrings of the fiery ones and the utterance of their crying "Holy." Blessed is the one whose breath is of the Holy Spirit and even the odor of his body is tempered by the One who takes delight in fragrant herbs.[1]
2. Blessed is the one whose soul is moistened with the sweetness of his God and even his bones receive their marrow from Him! Who will explain this blessing? Not even the spiritual <beings are able>! Blessed is the one to whom is revealed the place to which he is traveling and who burns with desire for it! Blessed is the one who knows the place of understanding and who perceives that there are no intelligent ones there: he understands a great mystery! Blessed is the one who obtains permission to enter that place and who here below makes friends with those who are there! Blessed is the one who is astonished by the beauty of these things and forgetting what fills with error those who stray, he himself becomes an ignorant one!

[1] Cant. 4:10.

سد

.لمقلم حلحلم

1. نبم لم لا حم لم سبم. ولمنمل لمحس لمحس ةا حم لم سبم ولمسمحصلم حفم سوحصلم. لم الملغ لمؤم سبم لمحصلم مم لم لمؤلم سوحصلم. سمؤللل لا لمحز مم. ومحس ولمسمحصلم ولمحس ومم لمحتممحصلم :سنم ومحس مم ومممم حفم لمحس ومم لمحتممحصلم حملمم :ومسم مم سمحم ومحس ومم. :لمحس متممم مم لمحس ولمحممحصلم حفم سوحصلم. .ومسقومم لمحصم لمؤم متمم سممحصلم لمحزم ةا سلمللم :ومم لمؤمم سمم ومممم حفم سوحصلم ؛لممؤحم حمحتللم ومحم ومممحس سمم
2. ةاه :ومحلل لمحصحس ممحم لمحجلمؤلم حفم سوحصلم للةا لمحفلس ممفم ممم .لمسوم ممم ممم سوحصتس :حس لل ومسمسم لمؤللم حفم سوحصلم. لمسؤ لمحلس ممم حفم سوحصلم. حمحلمفم لل حزم ولمحم لمؤلل سبم حفم سوحصلم. لمحم لمؤلم لمحلمةا :للمحم .لمح لمؤ لمحلمةا لمحلمةا. لمحقم ولم لمحم لمحم لمحلمةا. ومم لمؤللم للمحمم لمممم لمم حفم سوحصلم. حفم سوحصلم. ولم حجم لمتس لمؤم مم ولم. ولمحلم سحلم لمفم سوحلم :لمحسم لمؤممم حسوحصلم :لمتملس ؛لمسم لا مم لوسم

3. Oh! how amazing are your mysteries, O our God, who can believe them! My heart is transported at the remembrance of them and the limbs of my body come apart at their sweetness. I forgot what is mine by meditating on these things which I cannot approach, and in my desire I compel the Giver. I even forgot what is his, yet it is He whom I strive to receive. I seize Him but He is not held. I catch Him but He is not captured. When I am full, I am empty. And when I hold Him, He isn't there. Yet when I dwell in Him, He dwells in me.
4. When He is hidden from me, I am hidden in Him. And when I wish to see Him, I see that He is within, but from whence He comes I know not. Wherever I lead Him, He resists me: when clothed,[2] He will not remain and when stripped, He does not depart, but when left alone, He does not stay. When He goes with me to a place, He does not move from the place. But when I catch Him, He is full of sweetness. Then when I let Him go, He conceals Himself. When I obey Him, He speaks with me, but when I touch Him, He is not moved. When I walk with Him, as extended as He is outside of me, He dwells in me. When I inhale Him, He comes from within. And when I see Him within all, He assumes and covers all. When I see Him who carries all, I carry Him and go off.
5. Just how far will the appearance of the external sun indicate to you about his inwardness which shines over all? As you carry the brightness of the sun on your shoulder, so also you carry Him, but within you. And as you can see, here below the sun is everywhere; likewise He is in every place.
6. Glory to You who are hidden from all but to those who love You, You are manifest without interruption. O Darkness multi-splendored, O Light which because of the intensity of its brightness is comparable to thick darkness! Glory to You from all and on us be your mercy! Amen.

[2] Clothed, perhaps by trying to visualize Him.

3. ܐ ܕܐ ܐܡܪ ܐܢܐ ܠܟ ܗܠܝ ܕܐ ܐܬ

LETTER 39

1. These things which your love has demanded, my brother, are of those who bear the marks of Jesus[1] in their crucified members[2] and not our slothful and slack ones. Indeed, I have no authority over such things from the treasury[3] of the Life of all that is Christ; I am not his treasurer. I am full of all bad things and my rational mind is blinded by the visions of the world and it is not able like Paul to look at the reflection in a mirror.[4] Nor am I able to declare: *For it is the God who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," He has himself shone forth in our hearts*;[5] as also the Splendor of the glory of the Father said: "Blessed are those who are pure in their hearts, for *in their hearts they will see God*!"[6] This is the Kingdom which He said that *it is hidden within us*[7] and is revealed to the pure.

[1] Gal. 6:17.
[2] cf. Gal. 5:24; Rom. 6:6.
[3] cf. Matt. 13:52.
[4] cf. 1 Cor. 13:12.
[5] 2 Cor. 4:6.
[6] Matt. 5:8.
[7] Lk. 17:21; Matt. 13:4.

ﻫﺪ

ﺍﻟﻬﺪﻯ ﺍﻟﻤﻠﻚ.

1. ﺍﻟﻤﻠﻚ ﺍﻟﻬﺎﺩﻯ ﺍﻟﻤﻬﺪﻯ ﺍﻟﻤﻬﺪﻯ ﺍﻟﻬﺎﺩﻯ ﺍﻟﻤﻠﻚ. ﺍﻟﻬﺪﻯ ﺍﻟﻤﻠﻚ ﺍﻟﻬﺪﻯ ﺍﻟﻬﺪﻯ ﺍﻟﻬﺪﻯ

2. Nor am I able to hear the hidden mysteries and to say: "God has revealed this to us by his Spirit[8] who dwells in us,[9] who knows the depths[10] and utters them in us."[11] I am thirsting for the Living Waters, because I have not run to the source of blessings who calls to me with my companions: *Whosoever thirsts let him come to Me and drink*![12] Behold the prophet severely reproves me and his voice is hoarse from crying out to me: *O all who thirst, go to the waters*![13] Indeed, while from the heart of those who have drunk insatiably of Him, *streams of living water flow from their heart*[14]—these being the insights into the mysteries and the explanation of the parables—I have not yet become Jerusalem, the city of Christ, the eternal King. I confess that I am still Babylon and that unclean peoples dwell in me, that is, the passions of fornication, abominable to the Bridegroom, fairer than all.
3. *If you sell these things of yours*,[15] you may purchase for yourself that One who was sold for thirty pieces.[16] If you seek the Beautiful One, the desire for Him will torture you always. If you delight in this desire, his love will be in you incessantly. If you wish to find this One, keep the commandments. If you wish to see the One who is, why do you look with desire at that which is not? If you wish to put on the garment of light, why do you notice the imprints[17] on the garment of your soul? If you desire the Tree of Life in your paradise, why not uproot from it the one of good and evil?[18] If your soul is Jerusalem lauding Christ,[19] why are the sons of Babylon wandering in its streets?

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[8] cf. 1 Cor. 2:10.
[9] cf. Rom. 8:9; 1 Cor. 3:16.
[10] cf. 1 Cor. 2:10.
[11] cf. 1 Cor. 2:13.
[12] Jn. 7:37.
[13] Is. 55:1.
[14] Jn. 7:38.
[15] cf. Matt. 13:44–46.
[16] Matt. 26:15.
[17] According to Letter 15.3, these imprints would be "…images of the world, dead idols engraved in it."
[18] cf. Gen. 2:9; Tree of Life: this image is already prominent in Ephrem for whom Christ is the Tree of Life who gives "blessed fruits" to the baptized at the Eucharist. See Brock, *Luminous Eye*, 96. In the Book of Steps, all of Memra 21 is dedicated to the Tree of Life: "The good tree in that world of light invisible to the eyes of the flesh, is Our Lord Jesus. He is the tree of life who gives everything life by its fruits wherever the perfect will of God is, as Our Lord said, 'Pray so that the will of God might be on earth as it is in heaven'." See Kitchen, *Book of Steps*, 231–249. In 3 Enoch 5, "under the tree of life" is where the Shekinah dwells. Gruenwald thus sees this as a counterpart to theophanies in the Temple and on the throne of Glory. See I. Gruenwald, *Apocalyptic and Merkabah Mysticism* (Leiden: Brill, 1980), 50–51.
[19] cf. Matt. 21:9; Mk. 11:9.

2. ولكن هذه الأشياء لا تعني شيئاً لأولئك الذين لا يعرفون الله. إنهم يعيشون في عالم مختلف تماماً عن عالمنا. إنهم يعيشون في عالم الأشياء المادية. إنهم يعيشون في عالم الأشياء التي يمكن رؤيتها ولمسها وتذوقها وشمها وسماعها. إنهم يعيشون في عالم الأشياء التي يمكن قياسها وتقييمها بالمال. إنهم يعيشون في عالم الأشياء التي يمكن شراؤها وبيعها. إنهم يعيشون في عالم الأشياء التي يمكن أن تجلب لهم السعادة. إنهم يعيشون في عالم الأشياء التي يمكن أن تجعلهم يشعرون بالرضا عن أنفسهم. إنهم يعيشون في عالم الأشياء التي يمكن أن تجعلهم يشعرون بالأمان. إنهم يعيشون في عالم الأشياء التي يمكن أن تجعلهم يشعرون بالحب. إنهم يعيشون في عالم الأشياء التي يمكن أن تجعلهم يشعرون بالحياة.

3. إن هذا العالم هو عالم الأشياء المادية. إنه عالم الأشياء التي يمكن رؤيتها ولمسها وتذوقها وشمها وسماعها. إنه عالم الأشياء التي يمكن قياسها وتقييمها بالمال. إنه عالم الأشياء التي يمكن شراؤها وبيعها. إنه عالم الأشياء التي يمكن أن تجلب السعادة. إنه عالم الأشياء التي يمكن أن تجعلهم يشعرون بالرضا عن أنفسهم. إنه عالم الأشياء التي يمكن أن تجعلهم يشعرون بالأمان. إنه عالم الأشياء التي يمكن أن تجعلهم يشعرون بالحب. إنه عالم الأشياء التي يمكن أن تجعلهم يشعرون بالحياة.

4. Thus I heard in the place without sound: "If your place is not known; if your location is not special; if your work is not mixed with others; and those who dwell with you are silent; and you do not return a greeting to those who pass along the way;[20] and you have not walked on a trodden path: then sell your clothing for thirty pieces[21] and the world of light will be your portion." I rejoice in these things which I see, but these inaudible things make me rejoice even more. Blessed is the One who is diligent, for here below he will find all these things which have been cited.
5. Even if you did not turn aside and did not walk in the dark place of robbers, it is certain your way is oppressive. If your labor wearies you, you have not seen any fruit; if hunger afflicts you, you have not tasted the Bread of Life; if thirst torments you, the Source of Life is far from you; if in your paradise stands the One who tests freedom, you yourself stand naked and ashamed for you have no shelter[22] under the Tree of Life: go within yourself that you may see all which is outside and put out what is within, that the familiar ones driven out may enter for rest. Then the Builder will dwell with joy in his house.
6. Raise your dead by the One killed outside of the law;[23] destroy your adversary by the hidden life. Do not burden yourself with armor which is not invincible. If you have been illumined by the Master from his light, you also see in their light those who were illumined before you.[24] But if you did not accept this light, you will observe perfectly the second;[25] and with the first ones, you will make your dwelling. If thus He makes you blind to everything, the First is the Last who is received.[26]

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[20] cf. Lk. 10:4.

[21] Matt. 26:15, indicating little money such as the price of a slave (Ex. 21:32) for the "clothing" which is the garment of this life.

[22] cf. Gen. 3:10.

[23] cf. Jn. 19:7.

[24] See Macarius 15.38: "Similarly, as many lamps are lighted from the one, same fire, so also it is necessary that the bodies of the saints, which are members of Christ, become the same which Christ himself is." Found in: *Pseudo-Macarius: The Fifty Spiritual Homilies and the Great Letter*, trans. George A. Maloney (CWS 123, 1992). See also A. Orlov and A. Golitzen, " 'Many Lamps Are Lightened from the One": Paradigms of the Transformational Vision in Macarian Homilies," *VC* 55 (2001): 281–298.

[25] "Second" here refers to rational beings united to the bodies. "First ones" are the first beings, i.e., the angels. This is according to an East Syrian variation of an Evagrian interpretation. See Evag. Cent. I:50, 61. See also A. Guillaumont, *"Kephalia Gnostica"*, 241–242; 283.

[26] cf. Rev. 1:17; 22:13; Is. 44:6.

4. ههه لحبه لا ؤيلا لى .للا للا لإلاا لحلاا لحضه حهه .ههه هذهجو لهؤهه .لهلحبه لا ؤلهسهه .لهنه لا ؤلحههؤه .لهبه لا لسؤها تتحتح لهحهه .همهلهه ؤهه .ههلحلاا حه ؤههحه .لهجهؤ لا لاهنؤ لسؤهلحه .هؤتهه لها لهنؤ ححهه لها لهنه .ؤلهلته لإههه ؤهحه .همه .نهضلهجه ههههحهؤ .حتههه للا ححهه نلا حه .هؤهه هه ؤههحه سجها لحؤه*

5. لهها لإلاا لهجهؤ لا لهلههسهه .لهبه لا ؤيلهحهحه ؤ

7. Woe to me if until now I show my love to my friends only by these lines! Woe to me if I still console myself with the black ink of mourning, and do not see my Life beyond the dead! Woe to me if seeing mine though not united, I visit them only by means of a vision through the senses and I announce Life to them with a mortal word! Woe to me if there are still found in my region, mountains, high places, valleys, and plains! Woe to me if a border be joined to my world and if a single stirring[27] be found in me! Woe to me if I abide alone by myself and am not found at one with the Unique! Woe to me if a shadow is found in my Sun and if I only see what is in front of my face and not within me.
8. I must rise up above my place while not seeing anyone one of mine who would think these things of me or gaze on them as though they were mine. The one who is unaware considers me as his, and steals what is not his so that he steals from thieves what they themselves have stolen.[28] Come after me and see if you are in the truth. Walk on a little until the one who has preceded you remains at your side and you will know from where I say these things.
9. Alas, perhaps you will say: "There is no one who holds my hand that I might go up these steps." Then seek yourself the way to its summit, there you will find the One who will take you and bring you to these pleasures. If you do not wish to delay, lighten your course; if you desire to find, do not waste time; if you are looking for the haven, do not be agitated.

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[27] Stirrings (*zaw'ê*) and wonder (*tehrâ* / *témhâ*) occur in the soul as it journeys from glory to glory, but the ultimate condition is one of stupor (*témhâ*): "And every degree they ascend in glory they suppose to be the last. Then when they next enter into the vision they are exceedingly astonished at the light. They have fallen back into their first stage and supposed that this was the ultimate end, because there was not sufficient impulse (*zaw'â*) in them. One pulsates at every mansion with desire for increase. The visionary power is filled with wonder over the glorious sight, void of impulses (*zaw'ê*), in ecstasy (*témhâ*), and alternately experiencing sweetness and exultation in pleasure." See Discourse 14, Vat. 124, 319b; see also Vat. Syr. 125, 186b as found in Beulay, "Lettre XV," 273–274.

[28] Here John, in his humility, considers any seeming virtue of his to have been stolen and not truly his own, and he wishes this to be known by others.

7. ونحن نعلم أن الذين يقولون الحق لا نحن
نعلم أن الذين يقولون الباطل لا نحن
نعلم أن الذين لا يؤمنون بالآخرة هم أحق
بأن يقولوا الباطل. ونحن نعلم أن الذين
يؤمنون بالآخرة أحق بأن يقولوا الحق. ونحن
نعلم أن الذين يعلمون الأشياء الظاهرة
أحق بأن يعلموا الأشياء الخفية. ونحن
نعلم أن الذين يعلمون الأشياء الخفية
أحق بأن يعلموا الأشياء الظاهرة. ونحن
نعلم أن الذين يعلمون الأشياء الظاهرة
أحق بأن يعلموا الأشياء الخفية. ونحن
نعلم أن الذين يعلمون الأشياء الخفية
أحق بأن يعلموا الأشياء الظاهرة.

8. وأما الذين لا يؤمنون بالآخرة فإنهم
يقولون الباطل. ويعلمون الظاهر. ولا
يعلمون الخفي. ويقولون الباطل. ولا
يؤمنون بالحق. ولا يعلمون الخفي.
ويعلمون الظاهر. ولا يؤمنون بالآخرة.
ولا يقولون الحق. ولا يعلمون الخفي.
ولا يعلمون الظاهر.

9. وأما الذين يقولون الحق. ولا يقولون
الباطل. ويعلمون الظاهر. ولا يعلمون
الخفي. ويؤمنون بالآخرة. ولا يؤمنون
بالباطل. ولا بالظاهر. ولا بالخفي.

10. But what could concern me here in all of this, standing in a place which is not mine, and where I wage a battle because of those who are unaware of who I really am, a sinner? To my own, I offer this as bait to catch the hunter.[29] O Christ, Haven of all the mysteries, explain these things to your friends! Whoever would become a seer of all and a chosen dwelling of the Omniscient, let him understand!
11. One thing I ask of you and all these things I will give you: render this which you have borrowed and take all of these. You will say: "This is obscure!" But to the illumined ones it is a manifest light. Do you not know the hidden things? Then, how come you deal secretly with what is yours? Reveal what is yours to the Hidden One and He will reveal to you what is his. If you do not learn of Him from what is his, you are not dwelling in his habitation. And if you see Him in what is yours, grasp herein this great reality.
12. If a mother is in the pains of childbirth why would you ask for a kiss? It is a difficult thing for the discerning to learn foolish wisdom![30] However, as for me, the wise man I seek is the one who hides wisdom and thereby deceives the one who is not wise! There is nothing more sublime to the Most High than that which is despised by all.[31] The Beginning and the End[32] and the Sum of all, let Him be the limit for what is yours and by these things steal them away. Hide then your treasure: this treasure which when hidden slays the loathsome thieves.

[29] Hunter: one seeking Christ, as noted by Beulay.
[30] cf. 1 Cor. 1:27.
[31] cf. 1 Cor. 1:28.
[32] cf. Rev. 22:13.

10. ܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܡܪܝ ܠܐ ܬܗܘܐ ܠܟ ܐܠܗ ܐܚܪ ܐܠܐ ܐܢܐ. ܕܠܐ ܬܥܒܕ ܠܐ ܠܟ ܐܠܗ ܐܚܪ ܐܠܐ ܐܢܐ ܡܪܝ ܐܠܗܟ. ܐܢܐ ܡܪܝ ܐܠܗܟ ܐܢܐ ܗܘ ܕܐܦܩܬܟ ܡܢ ܐܪܥܐ ܕܡܨܪܝܡ. ܡܢ ܒܝܬ ܥܒܕܝ. ܘܠܐ ܬܗܘܐ ܠܟ ܐܠܗ ܐܚܪ ܐܠܐ ܐܢܐ ܡܪܝ ܐܠܗܟ. ܕܠܐ ܬܥܒܕ ܠܗܘܢ ܘܠܐ ܬܣܓܕ ܠܗܘܢ. ܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܡܪܝ ܠܐ ܬܗܘܐ ܠܟ ܐܠܗ ܐܚܪ ܐܠܐ ܐܢܐ ܡܪܝ ܐܠܗܟ. ܕܠܐ ܬܥܒܕ ܠܗܘܢ ܘܠܐ ܬܣܓܕ ܠܗܘܢ. ܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܡܪܝ ܠܐ ܬܗܘܐ ܠܟ ܐܠܗ ܐܚܪ ܐܠܐ ܐܢܐ ܡܪܝ ܐܠܗܟ. ܕܠܐ ܬܥܒܕ ܠܗܘܢ ܘܠܐ ܬܣܓܕ ܠܗܘܢ. ܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܡܪܝ ܠܐ ܬܗܘܐ ܠܟ ܐܠܗ ܐܚܪ ܐܠܐ ܐܢܐ ܡܪܝ ܐܠܗܟ. ܕܠܐ ܬܥܒܕ ܠܗܘܢ ܘܠܐ ܬܣܓܕ ܠܗܘܢ.

11. ܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܡܪܝ ܠܐ ܬܗܘܐ ܠܟ ܐܠܗ ܐܚܪ ܐܠܐ ܐܢܐ. ܕܠܐ ܬܥܒܕ ܠܗܘܢ ܘܠܐ ܬܣܓܕ ܠܗܘܢ. ܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܡܪܝ ܠܐ ܬܗܘܐ ܠܟ ܐܠܗ ܐܚܪ ܐܠܐ ܐܢܐ ܡܪܝ ܐܠܗܟ. ܕܠܐ ܬܥܒܕ ܠܗܘܢ ܘܠܐ ܬܣܓܕ ܠܗܘܢ. ܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܡܪܝ ܠܐ ܬܗܘܐ ܠܟ ܐܠܗ ܐܚܪ ܐܠܐ ܐܢܐ ܡܪܝ ܐܠܗܟ. ܕܠܐ ܬܥܒܕ ܠܗܘܢ ܘܠܐ ܬܣܓܕ ܠܗܘܢ. ܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܡܪܝ ܠܐ ܬܗܘܐ ܠܟ ܐܠܗ ܐܚܪ ܐܠܐ ܐܢܐ ܡܪܝ ܐܠܗܟ. ܕܠܐ ܬܥܒܕ ܠܗܘܢ ܘܠܐ ܬܣܓܕ ܠܗܘܢ.

12. ܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܡܪܝ ܠܐ ܬܗܘܐ ܠܟ ܐܠܗ ܐܚܪ ܐܠܐ ܐܢܐ. ܕܠܐ ܬܥܒܕ ܠܗܘܢ ܘܠܐ ܬܣܓܕ ܠܗܘܢ. ܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܡܪܝ ܠܐ ܬܗܘܐ ܠܟ ܐܠܗ ܐܚܪ ܐܠܐ ܐܢܐ ܡܪܝ ܐܠܗܟ. ܕܠܐ ܬܥܒܕ ܠܗܘܢ ܘܠܐ ܬܣܓܕ ܠܗܘܢ. ܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܡܪܝ ܠܐ ܬܗܘܐ ܠܟ ܐܠܗ ܐܚܪ ܐܠܐ ܐܢܐ ܡܪܝ ܐܠܗܟ. ܕܠܐ ܬܥܒܕ ܠܗܘܢ ܘܠܐ ܬܣܓܕ ܠܗܘܢ.

13. If you are a friend of God, why have you divinized yourself falsely and created what He did not create? Pass on a little from here, that you might accomplish what is beautiful. If there is shadow in your place and your world is temporal, stand at the foot of the mountain[33] and be ashamed that you did not give up the world and did not receive the eternal One. Let me now tell you this as an abuse fitting the remiss, until you truly see the light of Him who sees all and know that what you considered to be true is false. Persevere yet a little in the place that is difficult for you, if the light does not yet shine from the lamp of your ascetic life.
14. Because you asked me secretly about these lofty things whose elucidations are only revealed to the pure, I laid down for you here all these exalted things. But if you desire more obscure things I will send them to you by the strength of Our Lord: these things which if you gathered many teachers around you, they would not be able to show you what they are.

[33] cf. Ex. 19:17.

13. ولا تسأل عن الأحوال التي كنت أعاني منها في ذلك الوقت. فإن الله وحده يعلم ما كنت أقاسيه من الشدائد والمحن. وإني أشكر الله على ما أنعم به عليّ من الصبر والثبات. فإن الله لا يضيع أجر من أحسن عملاً. وقد كنت في ذلك الوقت أتردد على بيت المقدس، وأقيم فيه أياماً وليالي، وأتعبد الله فيه بما تيسر لي من الصلاة والصيام والذكر والدعاء.

14. وكنت في أثناء ذلك أتردد على بعض الأماكن التي كان يقيم فيها بعض الأولياء والصالحين، فأتبرك بهم وأتعلم منهم، وأستفيد من علمهم وعملهم. وكان من بين هؤلاء الأولياء رجل يقال له أبو عبد الله المغربي، وكان من أكابر العلماء العاملين.

LETTER 40

[About a beautiful meditation]

1. To those on whose intellect the Spirit of Life has been breathed[1] by Jesus, the Only-Begotten Word, our incorporeal Sun, a sight has been given them by Him unimpeded by anything. Just as the physical eye has power over all that is in existence because the created sun has the power to pass by it with its radiance, and its own view is extended without hindrance: so also it is for the spiritual eye which has obtained sight from Christ by means of purity, in that God is its Sun and He is stretched over all and in all without hindrance; likewise its own sight when it has acquired union with Him is stretched out over all and in all and above all, and all is a clear place for it. Who is able to prepare remedies for the eyes yielding light such as this? And all remains within him and he abides above all in a place of wonder and astonishment where there is no vibration and no motion, not bodily, not even belonging to the spirit, because he is joined in a union higher than any union, not even cognizant that he is in it.
2. O Mercy, how You abound! He who was scattered and dissipated, You have made recollected and unified. Who will bring him back to himself if not He who by his sign,[2] gathering all together into one,[3] summons those who are spread like particles of glass in the sand?

[1] cf. Jn. 20:22.

[2] Sign (*rémzâ*).

[3] Matt. 24:30, 31; 1 Cor. 15:52; 1 Thess. 4:16.

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الفصل الثاني عشر في الوصايا.

1. اعلم أن الوصية من أهم ما يجب على المسلم أن يعتني به، وأن يبادر إليه، وأن يحرص عليه، وأن يتخير له من يثق بدينه وأمانته، ويرجو عنده الخير والبركة، ويأمن عنده الجور والحيف. وقد أمر الله تعالى بالوصية في كتابه العزيز، وحث عليها رسوله الكريم ﷺ، وبين فضلها وثوابها، وحذر من تركها والتهاون بها. فقال تعالى: ﴿كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذَا حَضَرَ أَحَدَكُمُ الْمَوْتُ إِنْ تَرَكَ خَيْرًا الْوَصِيَّةُ لِلْوَالِدَيْنِ وَالْأَقْرَبِينَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ حَقًّا عَلَى الْمُتَّقِينَ﴾. وقال ﷺ: «ما حق امرئ مسلم له شيء يوصي فيه يبيت ليلتين إلا ووصيته مكتوبة عنده». وقال ﷺ: «من مات على غير وصية مات ميتة جاهلية، ومات على شعبة من نفاق». وقال ﷺ: «من مات على وصية مات على سبيل وسنة، ومات على تقى وشهادة، ومات مغفورا له». وقال ﷺ: «من مات على وصية مات على الفطرة، ومات على ال

3. One of the brothers was saying to me: "At first, because my intellect was not accustomed to it, when the light of the Holy Trinity was appearing in it to unite with it in imperceptible simplicity, deprived of understanding because of stupefaction at the light of Life: when it perceived the radiance unifying it, it was overcome with fear that it might never again return to itself." But when the brother became accustomed to the beatitude beyond all blessings and received the experience of its ineffable delight, and felt the strength which he acquired by it against the passions and against the demons: he saw the splendor of his intellect which on account of the beatitude became like God and he saw the familiarity[4] he partook with Him in everything as a son to his father. Thus he was speaking after that: "When the remembrance of the mystery that is to come arises in my intellect, my heart becomes fervent and my intellect is inflamed for the time when it will be held worthy of that glorious vision of the eternal Living One and will delight in its blessing."
4. Blessed is the one who in this world has seen this place and in it has girded himself for the place of joy. This is where its Sun does not set, nor does he see evening because the Sun never leaves. This is where understanding is without limit and also non-knowing is endless.[5] O our Creator, how your mercy abounds! For to those who wish to imitate your consubstantiality, You eagerly desire to give Yourself with what is yours. How wonderful it is in our hard times to see blossoms spring up higher than speech. The excellent treasures which were given from the Father of all to our fathers by his Spirit, today the diligent by their steadfastness openly bring forth these treasures and, behold, henceforth they take insatiable delight in them forever.

[4] Familiarity (*pârêsiyâ*).
[5] Evag. Cent. 3:63.

3. أما بعد فإن الله سبحانه وتعالى لما خلق الخلق ابتدأ في خلقه بالعقل فجعله أشرف خلقه وأكرمه عليه وأقربه منه وأحبه إليه وأعلمه بما له وعليه وأنطقه بالحكمة وأمره بالطاعة ونهاه عن المعصية وأعطاه الفهم عن الله والعلم بأمره ونهيه وأثابه على الطاعة وعاقبه على المعصية وجعل فيه الشهوة والنفرة والمحبة والبغضة والإرادة والكراهة وجعل فيه القوة والحركة والاستطاعة والآلة وأمره بالإقبال على ما يحبه ويرضاه والإدبار عما يكرهه ويأباه وأمره بالاجتهاد في الأمور والتعرض لما يعود عليه بالفوز والنجاة والكرامة عند الله والزلفى لديه وأن يؤثر حظه من الدنيا على حظه من الآخرة ويقدم ما يدوم على ما يفنى ويستعد بالقليل للكثير والحقير للخطير والظعن للمقام والذل للعز والهوان للكرامة والشقاء للسعادة والنار للجنة وأن يعلم أن الله سبحانه وتعالى لم يخلقه عبثا ولم يتركه سدى ولم يخلقه لغير معنى ولم يخلقه لغير ما هو فيه من الأمر والنهي والطاعة والمعصية والثواب والعقاب والجنة والنار.

4. فالعقل هو الذي به يعرف الله ويعرف أمره ونهيه ويعرف ما له وما عليه ويعرف أن الله هو الحق المبين وأن ما سواه من الأشياء كلها باطل وأن الله هو الغني وأن ما سواه من الأشياء كلها فقراء إليه وأن الله هو الحي الذي لا يموت وأن ما سواه من الأشياء كلها يموت وأن الله هو القوي الذي لا يضعف وأن ما سواه من الأشياء كلها ضعفاء وأن الله هو العزيز الذي لا يذل وأن ما سواه من الأشياء كلها أذلاء له وأن الله هو العالم الذي لا يجهل وأن ما سواه من الأشياء كلها يجهل ويعلم ويزيد وينقص وأن الله هو الحكيم في أفعاله وأقواله وأن ما سواه من الأشياء كلها يوصف بالعجز والتناقض في أفعاله وأقواله وأن الله هو الذي يدبر الأمور ويفصل الآيات ويعلم خائنة الأعين وما تخفي الصدور وأن ما سواه من الأشياء كلها لا يعلم شيئا من ذلك إلا بتعليم الله إياه وأن الله هو الذي يعلم ما كان وما يكون قبل أن يكون وكيف يكون إذا كان وأن ما سواه من الأشياء كلها لا يعلم شيئا من ذلك إلا بتعليم الله إياه وأن الله هو الذي يعلم ما في البر والبحر وما في السماء والأرض وما في الجنة والنار وما بين ذلك وأن ما سواه من الأشياء كلها لا يعلم شيئا من ذلك إلا بتعليم الله إياه وأن الله هو الذي يعلم ما في الأرحام ذكر أو أنثى أحمر أو أسود أبيض أو أشقر

5. Oh, what fortitude can do! They have lifted up their intellect, prepared by the eternal Living One for reception of such things, and they have put it in a place preserved from alien sensations where hosts of angels of light hover over in unceasing movement, in an ineffable world. And every now and then they are in an unspeakable union with the angels, with delicate whispers in a tongue not made of flesh, effected by the Spirit, the Paraclete. Then they do not perceive themselves and they are not able to understand what has been done in them since before them is a hedge of mystical silence. Behold, what ineffable amazement, that whatever then is chanted by them they are not able to understand.
6. This has not yet been given fully, however, to the second beings who are united, as it has been given to the first beings.[6] Even though those are prepared for the full and undifferentiated resemblance to them (first beings) which they will have in the worlds to come, and while even here in this place some (of the second beings) are able to understand, yet they are not able to bring forward what is from there to all who are in our world, for between there and here is a boundary of silence. While in that unified place, unifying the divided, they inhale a breath which vivifies the intellect and the soul, in a union higher than these (intellect and soul), having a sweet breath which is moved in them by the Paraclete; they say that this exhalation which vivifies all intellects, goes out also towards those who are still deprived of these things (intellect and soul) and thereby the animate spirit[7] is mysteriously stirred up. And when springs come forth which overflow from the ineffable sea, like unbroken waves of rays of light flooding over them, they forget their nature and do not remember what is theirs. Their intellect is a vessel and a resting place for such things. Though dry, they are never thirsty. Always hungry, they are granaries of life, packed every day.

[6] John seems here to revert to the original Evagrian thinking that "first being" indicates the intellect and "second being" the body. This would be different from the interpretation in Letter 39.6. But Beulay says that the mention of angels in the preceding paragraph leaves the question open, see LM, 29–31.

[7] According to Beulay, John's use of animate spirit here may be compared to Aphrahat, Demonstration 6:14. Thus the animate spirit is stirred up by the Spirit of Life as mentioned at the beginning of this Letter.

5. ܐܝ ܡܢ ܟܬܒ ܠܢ ܗܕܐ ܡܫܬܠ ܕܡܢ ܕܒܪ ܐܢܫ ܐܢ ܐܬ ܠܗ ܫܘܠܛܢ ܕܢܫܬܘܩ ܒܗ ܘܢܫܬܡܫ ܒܗ ܐܝܟ ܒܥܒܕ ܒܪ ܚܪ ܠܐ ܡܫܬܘܩ ܒܗ ܐܠܐ ܒܥܒܕ ܒܪ ܚܪ ܕܠܐ ܢ

7. Well, how sweet your love which inflames those who receive it and makes eager those who seek it! And before whom will these things be laid in the spiritual air that they might be his without his seeking them or abandoning himself and running away from himself, but be raised toward them without delay and consider these things below like dead dogs void of that life which consumes those who love it and makes those who cherish it to perish: this life whose mouth Christ shuts from all who are his! Amen. May He bind their intellect to Himself and soothe their soul with what is his and strengthen their bodies by his mercy in all ages and generations and forever and ever! Amen. May He reconcile and unite all those divided ones, created for unity such as this, and may He kindle in them his fire, this fire which always draws them to unite with Him.
8. Christ have pity on your servants! Have pity, my Lord, and raise up from the world those who have received your love to that place where they have been called by You and give them a complete hatred for this world. O Beloved, lover and loving One, longed for by all, gather to Yourself those who have left the world with all that is in it because of You: that neither existing things nor those to come may be able to separate them from You, nor may they be able to separate themselves from You. Christ, dew of mercy which has been sprinkled from the Eternal Being on our fiery world, moisten the souls who thirst for your life-giving drops, and germinate blossoms in them which will delight them together with the choirs of hosts of your holiness. Fill them with what is yours so that the things here below may not be able to enter their inner room but stay outside the dwelling, looking on from a distance.

7. ܐܘ ܚܒܝܒ ܟܗܢܐ ܕܒܝ ܐܠܗܐ ܕܐܒܪܗܡ ܘܐܝܣܚܩ ܘܝܥܩܘܒ ܕܐܠ ܚܫܒ ܐܢ ܐܢܐ ܐܡܪ ܠܟ ܕܐܠ ܬܫܬܘܩ ܠܡܫܬܐ ܕܐܝܬ ܒܗ ܚܝܠܐ ܠܡܥܒܕ ܐܠܐ ܠܐܠܗܟ ܒܠܒܕ ܘܒܟܠ ܢܦܫܟ ܘܒܟܠ ܡܕܡܟ ܬܪܚܡ ܥܠ ܡܫܟܒ ܒܢܝܟ ܘܥܠ ܒܝܬ ܡܫܟܢ ܟܒܘܕܟ ܠܐ

9. Blessed are those who give themselves to the practice of purification which liberates from unnatural enslavements and have made of their persons a temple, a house of rest and a dwelling for the One who is the calm weather and the haven for all the worlds. Blessed is the diligent monk who experiences mysterious visions because his intellect never ceases to receive the splendors of the universal Life. Blessed is the one who has seen his true being and does not spend years of his life like a beast. Blessed is the one who in his heart is set a pillar of ineffable light[8] and from whose house the inhabitants do not need to ask about an alien fire.
10. Oh, these unified choirs of swift flight, who chirping and chafing stir up all their own to a flight like theirs: this flight that continually revels in the air which is the breath of the Spirit of the eternal Living One and which never will consent to descend toward the corpses which are in our world. And if there is found among these unified choirs one whose wings the Beguiler has plucked and he is no longer able to be lifted up, they will bear him on their wings and bring him to their Healer. And by means of their intercession He will make him sprout wings of fire, burning the eyes of his enemies.
11. Because even despicable locusts while they are in one band when they arise from their place, twittering to one another, if anyone of them is lame or has its wings pulled off or is not yet endowed because of being little: they will carry it on their shoulders and they will bring it with them to wherever the sign[9] of the One who gives them life sets them in motion.

[8] cf. Ex. 13:21.
[9] Sign (*rémzâ*).

9. ܗܘ ܕܐܝܟ ܕܐܢ ܐܝܬ ܠܗ ܒܪ ܐܢܫ ܒܥܠ ܚܟܡܬܐ ܕܐܠܗܝܬ ܘܐܝܬ ܠܗ ܒܪ ܐܢܫ ܒܥܠ ܚܟܡܬܐ ܕܒܫܪ̈ܐ ܘܐܝܬ ܠܗ ܒܪ ܐܢܫ ܒܥܠ ܚܟܡܬܐ ܕܐܢܫ̈ܐ ܘܐܝܬ ܠܗ ܒܪ ܐܢܫ ܒܥܠ ܚܟܡܬܐ ܕܥܡ̈ܡܐ ܘܐܝܬ ܠܗ ܒܪ ܐܢܫ ܒܥܠ ܚܟܡܬܐ ܕܠܫ̈ܢ̈ܐ ܘܐܝܬ ܠܗ ܒܪ ܐܢܫ ܒܥܠ ܚܟܡܬܐ ܕܟܠ ܡܕܡ ܕܐܝܬ ܒܗ ܒܪ̈ܝܬܐ ܘܒܝܬ ܡܫܟܢܗ ܥܡ ܒܪ̈ܝܬܐ ܘܠܐ ܡܫܬܟܚ ܠܗ ܒܪ ܐܢܫ ܒܥܠ ܚܟܡܬܐ ܕܡܢ ܫܡܝܐ ܘܠܐ ܡܫܬܟܚ ܠܗ ܒܪ ܐܢܫ ܒܥܠ ܚܟܡܬܐ ܕܡܢ ܐܪܥܐ ܘܠܐ ܡܫܬܟܚ ܠܗ ܒܪ ܐܢܫ ܒܥܠ ܚܟܡܬܐ ܕܒܪ̈ܝܬܐ ܘܠܐ ܡܫܬܟܚ ܠܗ ܒܪ ܐܢܫ ܒܥܠ ܚܟܡܬܐ ܕܒܝܬ ܡܫܟܢܗ ܥܡ ܒܪ̈ܝܬܐ ܘܠܐ ܡܫܬܟܚ ܠܗ ܒܪ ܐܢܫ ܒܥܠ ܚܟܡܬܐ ܕܒܬܪ ܟܠ ܡܕܡ ܕܐܝܬ ܒܗ ܒܪ̈ܝܬܐ ܘ

12. Perhaps you will say: "What must I do, I who am deprived of fellowship such as this whose members go towards high places by means of the incentives effected by their various bands?" Listen to what my own poverty tells you which needs only a morsel of solicited bread. Because you say: "Here I am on the shore of the sea waiting in case someone come to me who is capable of navigating this, and also I will settle in his boat and he will cast me into the depth of the sea and will teach me how to fish in the sea, which nourishes those who attain the skill. And no longer will I be sustained by crusts of bread that do not satisfy those who beg for it."
13. But it is not at all like this! Those who are standing on the shore of the sea and seek to make a catch such as this while standing on the outside, they let down their nets to the sea that from it they might draw up food for their livelihood because they are not expert in negotiating the crests of the waves. While constantly longing for nourishment such as this, day by day they acquire an increase of love; and when Jesus our God sees them so exhausted, He will go out to them from the bosom of his Father and by means of his sign, gather the dispersed into one unity.[10] He will gather the amazing catch of fish and will command the intellect, <like> Peter, to lift it up.[11] And when the band of those staying on your ship will have eaten of it, the eyes of their heart[12] will be opened and they will recognize Him[13] and when they have been doubly instructed, they will be persuaded that He never left their boat, but He was in it, sleeping[14] and hidden.

[10] cf. Matt. 24:30; 1 Cor. 15:52; 1 Thess. 4:16.
[11] cf. Jn. 21:11.
[12] cf. Eph. 1:18.
[13] cf. Lk. 24:31.
[14] cf. Matt. 8:24.

12. ههه بمحم لمحا وهما بمحم لمحا وهما بمحم لمحا وهما

14. Therefore everyone who is diligent awakens Him every day to rebuke the waves of the sea into silence, and by the breath of his Holy Spirit, to bring his boat unharmed with all that is in it to the haven and rest for all. To Him with his Father and the Holy Spirit, one power accomplishing and perfecting all by his complete perfection,[15] be praise with resounding voices from all the perfected ones of the choirs above with the assemblies below! To Him who unites these with those in one indivisible union with Him, be praise with resounding voices, new praise with the stirrings of an incessant silence, in all the worlds which have been and which are, forever and ever. Amen.
15. Do not blame me for not coming to you: I am a servant who does not have the power for what he desires. But when I am bound, I am free and when I am free, I am bound with shackles. When I wish to flee from myself, I am not able to go out from myself. And when I struggle to come to myself, I am not able to approach myself! Night and day I am felled by these uncertainties and there is no rest for me. What am I to do? I am not able to find myself nor am I able to flee from myself.
16. Let us make tearful supplication that in being bound by the fetters which lay hold of everything, I be fastened indissolubly above the world and that these ties might loosen me from myself and from everything by binding me to themselves in mercy without my merit, ties which have bound all the Powers on High with a love such as this. May He who holds all, the Father of all, grant to all of us and to all who desire Him, to be with Him in a total resemblance of the Powers, here below as in the life beyond. To Him be glory, forever and ever. Amen.

[15] Complete perfection (*šumlâyâ gmîrâ*).

14. ܡܢ ܠܐ ܒܗ ܪܘܚܠܐ. ܚܟܡ ܡܫܬܚ ܚܕ. ܚܡܕܐ ܟܠ ܡܫܟ ܡܢ ܒܗ ܐܡܪ ܚܕ ܒܫܡ ܐܠ ܐܡܪ ܠܐ ܐܢ ܒܗ ܐܠ ܐܢ ܐܡܪ ܐܢ ܐܡܪ ܐܢ ܐܡܪ

LETTER 41

1. If then you ask, my brother, why I do not narrate these hidden mysteries in your presence for your consolation when you come to me, know that this does not depend on me. For I am like a young child who while he is within his father's house, all kinds of precious things are put before him for his pleasure and joy: here, all sorts of sweet foods; there, all sorts of fine things, gold and silver, pearls and precious stones. And on all sides there is everything which pleases and delights and he enjoys and is glad for them.
2. But when he goes out to the children, his friends, his father fills his pocket with ordinary fruits and sends him out to divert himself with his friends and to refresh them. He does not provide him with special things, lest being young he lose his treasure.. And if he resists and begs on account of his innocence, his father who knows what is advantageous, closes the door to the treasures lest he see them at such times.
3. Now you see my foolishness!

هدا

.اسه حصوا

1. ابم اجا: اسه: وحصوا لا ابا ابا لا اسحصوا حسه ها ابا ابا لا اسحصوا حسه ها ابا ابا لا اسحصوا حسه ها

LETTER 42

[To a brother who was pursued by the creditors of his natural father]

1. To anyone who requires this debt from you say: "If I have a father in the world, I also possess the property he leaves, land and things, a house and vines. But if these things of his are not mine, neither am I his son. And if I have gone out from the world, my Father is Christ. He has requited my debt with his blood. And I do not have a father who is a debtor, whose debt I must repay to his fellow debtors." Do not give to those in the world and do not receive from the world so as not to become a son of the world.
2. As our Father has told me to teach you, brother, so I have taught you.

Prayer[1]

1. O Christ, ocean of our pardon, allow this impurity with which I am clothed to be cleansed in You and may I shine in the garment of your holy light and be covered with the cloud[2] of your hidden glory and secret mysteries. May those things which might turn me from the sight of your beauty not be visible to me. May the wonder of your glory captivate me always, my Lord, and may my mind not be able to accept worldly impulses. Let nothing, my Lord, be able to separate me from your love, but may the desire to see your face torment me always. Amen.

[1] For other Prayers from the Syriac mystical tradiditon, see Brock, *Syriac Fathers*, 340–364. See also J. Sanders, "Un manuel de prières populaire de l'église syrienne," *Le Muséon* 90 (1977): 81–102.

[2] cf. Ex. 20.21.

حد

حتم حك ٥٥٥ حركي بم لما لحك :حلاله حصولي
لمحه حمصلي الحمه.

1. لحكك لما ل .حك نمل لوم الحمه حب لحظ لحك
الحمه .الحتره لحنا .لما لمع ملاله حا :حب لما
.حلما ومح الله :حب لحب حكم حكم لم .لمتمه
حتم وه. ٥٥ لسمه حبم لما :لمعل لحكك مع لم
ملحمه :لحس لما حب لحكه .ممم حبم الحمه
حمل لله :لمحكك لحلا لله .ملتم لحتسك حمتما
مع حكمل. ولا لموك مح لحكك*
2. لمحل مكلك .حمس لحك حب نمل لمحل*

.الحب

1. ممسه لمل ومحه :حمهم لمل لسمه
لوم الله حيجلل حب حبحم :حمهم
للمنحه .لمل مبحك لموله. لما مبحك
حب حتلل لله .لمنال الله سبح لنملم
حب نمل سحمم نحتم مع حكم .حب ممحل
حتم حمل نمحم حتنم سحمم لوم
لل .حمل حمولم لسمك :حمهم حمنفل حب الحم*

LETTER 43

[On repentance[1] and the hope and exhortation of sinners]

1. If, then, you ask, my brother, how repentance is able to renew a person who is decayed and decomposed by sin, remember and consider his first creation, from what and in what manner, that is, from something mean and foul—in a dark and narrow womb—and how the grace of our God put together this foul matter in the dark womb with all its complex structure and brought it forth to the light of this world, formed and pure and beautiful and loveable. So also it is for the one who because of Satan's influence has corrupted his purity from holy baptism and is defiled and becomes abominable again by all the impure ulcers of sin: by means of his birth from the sad and dark womb of repentance, he goes forth to the light of the spiritual world, the symbol of which he received in baptism.

[1] Repentance (*tyâbûtâ*) see Beulay, ES*,* 55–60; see John's Discourse 19, "Admonitions and Counsels on Holy Repentance," Vat. 124, 346a–348a. In Jewish Midrashic material, some beautiful passages can be found on repentance. It is considered to be one of the seven things created before the creation of the world. See "The power of Repentance" in *Pirke Rabbi Eliezer*, trans. G. Friedlander (New York: Sepher-Hermon Press, 1981), 337–344. (PRE is a 9th cent. redaction, most of the material belonging to an earlier period). See also Ephraim E. Urbach, *The Sages* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1979), 462–471. Gershom Scholem quotes a Babylonian Gaon (8th cent.) linking the path of repentance with the "ecstatic progress through the seven heavens" leading to the throne of glory. See G. Scholem, *Major Trends*, 78. Several scholars (P. Alexander, S. P. Brock, A. Golitzen, T. Kronholm, and N. Sed, among others) have in fact noted the presence of Jewish materials among the writings of the East Syriac tradition.

٩٥

وإنما يحتاج إلى تحليل. كل واحد من هذه الأمثلة يتألف من:

1. اسم إشارة: ما، هذا، هذه، ذلك، تلك، هؤلاء، هاتان، هاتين، هذان، هذين، ذانك، تانك، ذانِك، تانِك، أولاء، أولئك، هنا، هناك، هنالك، ثَمَّ، هنّا، هنّاك، هنّالك، ثمّ، ثمّة، ثمّت، ثمّتَ، ثمّتِ، ثمّتُ، ثمّتْ، ثمّتَا، ثمّتَا، ثمّتِي، ثمّتُو، ثمّتْنَ، ثمّتَانِ، ثمّتَيْنِ، ثمّتَانِ، ثمّتَيْنِ، ثمّتُونَ، ثمّتِينَ، ثمّتَانِ، ثمّتَيْنِ، ثمّتُونَ، ثمّتِينَ، ثمّتْن

2. For example, this ugly seed, if it be cast into pure, spacious, and luminous earth, and does not go into the dark and grievous womb: it will be useless and without likeness to what produced it. So also he who is disfigured and corrupted by sin, if he does not enter the dark, chastening, and painful womb of repentance, will remain loathsome and without likeness to Him who by holy baptism is his Progenitor. And just as corporeal Adam by Eve begets sons in his resemblance for the corporeal world, so Christ, Father of the spiritual world, by repentance and baptism brings forth sons in his image for his spiritual world. And just as the newborn when he goes out from the darkness of Eve's womb, immediately sees the light of Adam's world; so also when the sons of God go out from the dark womb of repentance, the glorious light of the new world shines before them as it proclaims to them the principle of their life while saying: Repent, the kingdom of heaven is near![2]
3. If repentance is close by, show us, Father, how we can find it. *It is at the door*,[3] but *the door is narrow and constraining*.[4] However, all who endure its dark and gloomy severity and go through it, immediately encounter the kingdom of light and take delight. Again, this is the narrow door to enter life: but your Kingdom, Our Lord, in which place is it found?—*It is within you*[5] and its door is repentance.
4. Repentance restores the life of baptism through absolution. Even as worthless matter in a dark womb acquires the image of the person of Adam, so a person defiled and made foul by sin: if you bring him into the fiery furnace of repentance, he is cleansed and made pure and shines. He becomes beautiful and fragrant and acquires by the grace renewing him the image of the beauty of Christ, the splendor of the Father.[6] Repentance is the mother of life:[7] blessed is he who is born of her, because he will die no more.[8]

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[2] Matt. 3:2; 4:17.
[3] Matt. 24:33.
[4] Matt. 7:14; Lk. 13:24.
[5] Lk. 17:21.
[6] Heb. 1:3.
[7] cf. Gen. 3:20. See Isaac of Nineveh, Homily 65 in Bedjan, *Mar Isaacus*, 443.
[8] cf. Rom. 6:9; Jn. 11:26; 6:50.

2. الشيعة الحق الخارجة الأمة وهذا لهم هي الخوارج لرأي
لا أنهم. الإسلام الجماعة لهم الخلاف لا الذين
بعينه سألها هي أن الحق. وتحريفه الأمة لا بعض
الصلاة. الكفر لا هذا بعينه فحرف الأمة لهم
هذا الحق في وتحريفه الأمة لا الذي هذا. الأمة
حتى هو يحمل لهم. الإسلام في يوم الحق الذي
الحكم أن لهم الذين الأمة. الإسلام محمد عليه
عليه حتى هو يحمل الحق الأمة من. لهم
بعينه الجماعة من لا الذي معنى لهم لرأي. لهم
حتى معنى لم الذي. أنهم يحمد أن لهم الذين
لهم محمد وعيد لم الذي. الأمة الإسلام حق في الكفر
الحكم الذي الخارجة هذا الله. الجماعة الجماعة
الجماعة الذي الخارجة هو الله. الجماعة الإسلام
بعينه. الأمة الجماعة هو الذي. الأمة الإسلام
الجماعة.

3. الخارجة لا الله. الله لهم الذين. الحق الذين هو الذي
بعينه وتحريفه لا الذي الإسلام هو الله. الأمة
الجماعة عليه الجماعة الذين الجماعة هو الله. الأمة
الجماعة الذي الخارجة هذا الله. الجماعة الإسلام
الجماعة الذي الخارجة هو الله. الجماعة الإسلام
الجماعة الذي الخارجة هو الله. الجماعة الإسلام
الجماعة الذي الخارجة هو

5. However, as Christ preaches repentance to his own, likewise Satan alienates from this repentance those who obey him and he steeps their hearts in debauchery and amusement. But just as repentance is a remedy of life for those who are dead in sin, so it is also a poison which kills the passions and sin, and is a great torture for Satan, her adversary. For the captives he captures in his cruelty, she saves and frees. She destroys his labor of years in an instant. The slaves who voluntarily pledge him their freedom, repentance restores them to their heritage and torments their oppressor. The seed of thorns which Satan sowed in our land[9] and carefully made to grow for many years: in one day repentance burns and purifies the field that it might yield fruits a hundredfold[10] from the seed of the Plowman who is Christ.
6. The ramparts which Satan took a long time to build to enclose the captives bound in darkness: for a brief moment repentance breathes on them and they are cast down and *the light shines out on the face of those who sit in darkness*.[11] Their chains are broken and their adversities are changed into joy and their tears into great rejoicing. He who had bound them is himself bound by the reins of darkness and delivered by them to the scourgers. Repentance destroys all his works, and all the pains he caused the servants who are not his, she heals and restores. All whom he has killed she resuscitates, all his traps she shatters, and all his snares she cuts to bits.
7. Repentance smoothes the road before those who love her so that they proceed without stumbling on the way which Christ has given. She makes fornicators virgins. She purifies the fiery ones who have become tarnished. She leads them from the taverns to the desert for the work of angels, but the lucid ones who disregarded her, she has renounced them and they have gone down into the devouring pit. She goes into the house of harlots and takes the fornicators and from her wings she begets them as virgins of Christ. She restores the apostolate to traitors, but the apostles who laid it aside have clothed themselves in darkness. She herself is the garment of the penitent and those who put it on she clothes with the glory of Jesus, the true Light.[12]

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[9] cf. Matt. 13:25.
[10] Mk. 4:8.
[11] Matt. 4:16; Lk. 1:79; Is. 9:2; 42:7, 16; Acts 26:8.
[12] Jn. 1:9.

5. ܠܟܠ ܗܕܐ ܐܡܪ ܐܢܐ ܒܟܬܒ ܠܟ ܡܢ ܠܒܝ ܘܐܦ ܒܫܠܡ ܐܢ ܐܬܐ ܠܘܬ ܐܚܝ ܒܫܠܡ ܘܐܢ ܠܐ ܐܬܐ ܠܘܬ ܐܚܝ ܒܫܠܡ ܐܦ ܗܟܢ ܐܢ

8. She leads people on the highways to the kingdom and from the hedges she brings them into the banquet.[13] From dark beings she forms luminous ones and the blind she makes to see. She uproots the tree whose fruits are a deadly potion and will plant the Tree of Life in our paradise.[14] She carries on her wings sweet spices of grace and perfume to those who are made foul by impurity, if they accept her. She stands at the door of the celestial Bridegroom and whoever passes by her, He himself goes to meet. In her hands are placed the nuptial crowns and whoever inclines before her she makes recline in the bridal chamber. Also in her hands the keys of the Kingdom are placed and whoever desires her and loves her, she makes a steward.
9. She is the mother[15] of the celestial eagles and all who are born of her she makes them sprout wings of fire and they fly with the spiritual beings on high. Everyone whose wings hunters have torn and who seeks shelter under her wings for a few days, receives flying wings from her, more fiery and swifter than the first ones.
10. She is the remedy of the celestial healer and whoever puts it on his hurt is healed immediately. She does not cut with a knife nor inflict cauteries. Her medicines are mixed with mercy and she bandages wounds with soft things. The deadly drug of amusement and licentiousness is in the hands of Satan, but the drug of life, repentance, is in the hands of Christ. Everyone who has drunk from the cup of the Slayer, let him draw near and drink the medicine of the Vivifier of all and he will live forever.
11. She enters the graves and visits the dead and anyone whom death has swallowed up and who has drawn near to her wings, she tears death open and he goes out from its belly. She sees the blind who weep each day at her gates and she draws them to show the light of joys. She sees the slain whom Satan has killed, and calling, she resurrects them in the anticipated resurrection.[16] She is the treasure of the sons of our Redeemer and in her are preserved the riches of their labor.

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[13] cf. Lk. 14:23.

[14] cf. Gen. 2:9.

[15] In the Discourses, John refers to repentance as a mother: "Glory to thee, O Father of all, for giving us a new mother for a new birth, before the complete birth from thine own womb…she cleanses, purifies, beautifies, and cherishingly shelters under her wing those born of her…." See Discourse 19, Vat. 124, 348a.

[16] cf. Eph. 2:6; Col. 2:12.

8. ܗܘ ܡܢ ܚܕ ܡܢ ܐܡܪ. ܐܝܟ ܐܠܗܝܟ ܐܠܡܫܝܚܐ ܚܕ ܡܢ ܗܘ ܐܠܗܐ ܐܠܐܒ ܐܠܐ ܒܪ

12. She is a sea washing anyone who is unclean and a fiery furnace purifying anyone who is tarnished. She is a fire consuming all the tares, and water causing holy seeds to grow. She is a garden delighting her associates and a desert terrifying all the rebels. She is the earth, making the sons of light to grow, and in her hands there is a basin for whoever is unclean. She is a wet-nurse of new-born babes, sons from on high, and she is the one who rears the heirs of Christ. She is a rampart protecting all within and a warrior returning anyone who is a captive.
13. She is a temple for impure peoples, and from her they receive the holiness for their crying "Holy." She is a house and a dwelling for those who are buffeted and she makes them heirs to the Kingdom. She is the treasury in which are all the treasures and anyone who knocks at her door receives his necessities from her.
14. She is a mother whose womb is not sterile and anyone who is barren and draws near to her receives beloved children from her. She is the portress who stands at the door of the Creator and if anyone has received sentence and comes near and petitions her, she goes and frees him. In her hands is placed a heavenly sprinkling and if the place which is lacking in rain takes refuge in her, she opens her hands and waters it. She follows the destroyer of the camp[17] and when they call out before her, she draws near and restrains him.
15. She accompanies all the angels and from those who love her she removes all the chastisements which have been prescribed. She stands at God's door and restores to her followers all good things which go out from Him. She is the advocate of wrongdoers and when they draw near to petition her she stands before them.

[17] 2 Kings 19.35.

12. ܗܕܐ ܠܐ ܡܢܐ ܠܗܘܢ ܐܝܟ ܕܐܢܐ ܐܡܪ ܠܟ ܠܐ ܐܫܬܘܕܥ ܒܗ ܐܠܐ ܒܡܐ ܕܐܬ

16. Who would not love you, O Repentance bearer of all good things, except Satan who hates you because you plunder his riches. You destroy his possessions and make him indigent. You torture him with the vain efforts of his works and you separate him from the heirs that were not his but were held captive by him. This one is truly your enemy and at every moment you oppose him. There is no one who has fallen into his hands, and once you have seized him did he become a prey again to Satan for food. There is no one who has called you while he was between Satan's teeth without you breaking his teeth and rescuing him. There is no one whom Satan has swallowed and who has from his belly implored you, without your tearing open his belly and bringing him out.
17. There is no one whom Satan entangled when you were not near and he called to you, without you having quickly cut his bonds and freed him. There is no one whom Satan snatched while you were far away, and he called to you, without you having immediately caught up and rescued him. Because of all of these things the devil hates you for you have hated him intensely. He hates you because at all times you stand against him; he hates you because he is the enemy of your Giver. And you oppose him as also your Lord Himself, his adversary, opposes him.
18. There is no one who has sought refuge with you and then gone down into Sheol, nor has anyone gone up to heaven without being yours. Who has seen God without you? And who has caught hold of you and fallen into the hands of Satan? Who has been purified unless you have washed him? And who has drawn near to your basin and anything unclean was found in him? Who has not watered his seed from your rain without reaping a sheaf of joy from it? Who is he who has applied for your remedy and not been found far from all infirmities?
19. Who is he who has not drawn near to your door and in whom there is a healthy place? Who is moistened at all times with your sprinkling and has not seen God in his heart? Who has not tasted your drink and whose heart has not become a source of darkness? Who has received his request without your speaking on his behalf? And who has received you through his petition and did not open thereby the door of God's treasures?

16. ܒܗ ܠܐ ܡܬܒܥ ܐܢܫ ܕܒܝܬ ܐܠܗ ܘܠܐ ܡܫܬܡܥ ܠܡܠܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܐܠܐ ܒܓܠܝ ܘܒܓܠܝ ܕܓܠܝ ܐܢܐ ܐܝܟ ܕܐܡܪ ܠܟ ܒܪ ܐܢܫ

20. There is no one who has taken you with him for battle without your having delivered his enemies to his sword. There is no one who has clothed himself in you before his Adversary without those who hate him being defeated before him. You delivered David who sinned.[18] You stood before Ahab, the infidel.[19] A rebuke was decreed against the Ninevites, but you acted mightily and rose up and saved them.[20]
21. You are blessed, O mother of pardon, you whom the Father full of mercies has given to us: He does not resist you when you entreat Him for He has placed you as an advocate to sinners. He does not close his door when you petition, for to you He has entrusted the keys of the Kingdom. Indeed *the Kingdom is at hand: repent!*[21] This is the seal which the heirs of the Kingdom take with them: "Repent, the Kingdom of heaven is at hand! Take repentance along with you, lest you become strangers to the Kingdom!"
22. The first generation which did not drink her draught, anger drowned it by the flood.[22] Sodom which did not want to receive her, a heavenly fire consumed it.[23] Pharaoh who drove her from him was smitten by the drowning waves.[24] But whoever takes her with him in his company, chastisement obeys her word. When the Creator[25] commands, chastisement punishes without pity, but when he petitions repentance, she is quiet and finds peace instead of doing harm. It is she who restores the works which Satan has destroyed. And she bestows heavenly gifts. She renews virginity which has been stained and she keeps from harm whoever has not been corrupted.

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[18] cf. 2 Sam.7:13.
[19] cf. 1 Kings 21:27–29.
[20] cf. Jonah 3:5.
[21] Matt. 3:2; 4:17.
[22] cf. Gen. 6.
[23] cf. Gen. 19.
[24] cf. Ex. 14:28.
[25] 'Creator' does not occur in the Syriac text used here but is found in ms B and in the Arabic version, as noted by Beulay.

20. ܗܕܝܫܐ ܕܡܪܝ ܐܠܗܐ ܘܠܐ ܐܬܚܙܝ ܠܗ ܒܚܙܘܢܐ ܕܒܪ ܐܢܫܐ ܘܚܝ ܢܬܚܙܐ ܠܗ. ܘܗܘ ܕܠܒܕ ܐܝܬ ܒܗ ܐܠܗܘܬܐ ܘܫܘܠܛܢܐ ܕܠܥܠܡ ܥܠܡܝܢ. ܐܡܝܢ ܘܐܡܝܢ ܣܠܐ ܠܡܪܝ ܐܠܗܐ ܘܡܠܟܐ ܕ

23. Glory to the One who has come to save us, and who with his own voice has preached repentance to us when He said: "Repent! For when you have repented then you will be saved and you will find the Kingdom which is near to you and is hidden within you,"[26]—calling "Kingdom" his revelation in those who love Him. As also of his coming He said: "The Kingdom is near." And the Apostle says: If Christ is not in you, you are reprobates,[27] that is, strangers from the Kingdom.
24. And as by repentance Christ saved captives, so Satan by means of amusement and pleasure and ease, has led those who are not his to himself. *Narrow is the way*[28] of repentance, but it leads to the Kingdom *to be with Christ in God*.[29] Broad is the way of satisfactions and pleasures, but it leads to the darkness of Satan to be with him in Gehenna. And as a kingdom judges in wisdom what is fitting, so Christ the Wisdom of the Father,[30] our Kingdom forever, judges and manages all in his wisdom, higher than all, because He is the understanding of the Father, source of all wisdoms, the store of treasures. To Him glory from all, forever and ever!
25. Whoever's tears at the time of his repentance are less than his draught has not yet shown genuine repentance. If the bones and the flesh, from the toenails to the brain, grew hot with the heat of suffering, they would have released all their moisture and been left dried up. And so the unclean spirit is not able to wander there in these waterless places.[31] But if the hand of Jesus Christ does not touch the heart, this cannot happen. And if there is one whose heart is hard let him take refuge in the prayers of others.

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[26] cf. Lk. 17:21.
[27] cf. 2 Cor. 13:5.
[28] Matt. 7:14.
[29] Col. 3:13.
[30] cf. 1 Cor. 1:24.
[31] cf. Matt. 12:43; Lk 11:24.

23. ܒ ܐܠܚܢ ܟ ܙܐ ܡܚܡܕ ܡܙܒ ܐܠ ܗܟ ܫܡܗ ܡܫܡ ܐ ܡܫ ܡܐ ܗ ܐ ܐ ܒ ܐܠܡ ܡܚ ܐ ܐ ܐ

26. For example, one who is vexed and tempted by demons, is troubled and agitated and disturbed, reviling those who pray for him. But when he is saved from the demons by means of the prayer of others, he is restrained and regrets what he has done. So also, one who is vexed by a demon through the passions of licentiousness, is hard of heart, wrathful, a detractor, a slanderer, avaricious, troublesome, jealous, disorderly, rabid—and not only has no regret about these things, but even scorns penitents.
27. But with God's help, when the devil, who misled him and made him to sin is cast out by the prayers of the diligent ones, his heart is humbled. He is composed and chastened. He makes lamentation. He weeps. He is at peace and regrets his faults. He remembers his soul. He knows his weakness and asks for mercy. He rejoices with those who repent. He suffers for the weak and is filled with pity for the afflicted. He remains with the pure, beseeching them to show him the way of God, submitting himself before them he asks for mercy and persuades them to help him by prayer to find the strength to progress. His soul is shining, his work is pure and his odor is perfumed by the gifts of grace. He is loved by the angels, he tramples on the demons and scorns their inducements. He rules over the passions and conquers sin. Day after day he penetrates the mysteries of the Spirit, obtains confidence in prayer and his heart exults with joy. He goes up to God with his help and shines in his Glory. He becomes well acquainted with his mysteries and is made worthy of the blessing of his vision. This is the profit from prayer to the one who earnestly asks for it.

26. ܐܪܡ ܘܐܡ ܐܡܪ ܟܬܒ ܠܗ ܡܢ ܐܢܫ ܐܚܪ ܕܐܢ ܐܬ ܒܥܐ ܠܡܫܡܥ ܡܢ ܐܠܗ ܐܘ

LETTER 44

1. We are not able to repay you, my brother, for your love of us. For we have not found the Bread of Life which the diligent acquire by their personal sweat, with which we might nourish our friends with profusion of heart and kind regard. But I believe in Christ, my Lord, that He will repay you according to the greatness of his grace.
2. My brother, this is the time of grief. Only with difficulty and great labor can a person save himself from the snares of the Beguiler. Be covered, my brother, with humility at all times for it will clothe your soul in Christ, its donor. A beautiful bright star will shine out for the humble one from his heart[1] and at each genuflection during prayer, he will see its beautiful reflections. Lay hold of modesty and chastity because they purify your soul from the defilement of the passions that befoul the dissolute like me. Control your sleep and your belly with moderation that your soul might take delight in a sleep of spiritual dreams and in radiant thoughts when awake. Restrain your tongue from all vain words that your mind might rule over the passions and the wicked demons. Guard against anger and angry persons because they deprive the soul of the holy light. Separate yourself from the one whose manner of life is not orderly and set right, lest he make you into a slave of sin.

[1] cf. 2 Peter 1:19.

مم

مصطلحات الفصل

1. حلل أقوى موجود بأنه: موجود لا يعتمد في وجوده على أي موجود آخر، ويتصف بالوجوب الذاتي والوحدانية والبساطة المطلقة. وهو الذي تصدر عنه جميع الموجودات الأخرى بالفيض أو الخلق. وقد سمّى الفارابي هذا الموجود بالمبدأ الأول.
2. أنس: حالة من الطمأنينة والسكينة والاستقرار النفسي التي يشعر بها الإنسان عند اقترابه من معرفة حقيقة الله. ويتحقق الأنس بالمعرفة الصحيحة والعبادة الخالصة، وهو ثمرة من ثمرات السير والسلوك إلى الله. وقد تحدث عنه العرفاء والصوفية بإسهاب.

3. Let your intimacy be with the friends of God that your soul might resemble their purity. Sing praises in your soul[2] at all times that your heart might become a temple for God.[3] Guard your eyes from all displays which stir up desire. Do not be the friend of a young boy because he makes the one who associates with him into an evil-doer. Remain alone with yourself that you might be a sharer in God's mysteries. Great is the man of discernment; everything he does is for God and the fruits of his labor are eternal life. Obey all the commands of your brothers and like a wise person, knowingly preserve your soul from any harmful commandment. These things are sufficient for one who is wise.

[2] Eph. 3:19.
[3] 1 Cor. 3:16.

3. ⵎⵎⴰ ⵜⵙⵙⵓ ⵍⵍⵉ ⵏⵜⵜⴰ ⵏⵜⵜⵉⵏⵉ. ⵙⵉⵖⵓⵔ ⵏⵜⵜⴰ ⵏⵜⵜⵉⵏⵉ

LETTER 45

1. My brother, each day when I begin again the labor of life[1] as if in a field, I have never seemed diligent to the owner of the vineyard.[2] And see, with shame I eat the bread of beggars and the eyes of my soul are darkened from lack of the Bread of Life which enlightens the eyes. Pray, my brother, that the darkness be dispelled from the face of our firmament and the bright Sun be visible with its beautiful reflections in our place. For look, its inhabitants stand in awe and await its appearance, gladdening those who seek Him.
2. Alas, how long will sighs distract our consolation? When will our joy last forever because the rising of our glorious Sun will not set in our place[3] and its inhabitants will never see a shadow? When indeed will our footsteps be in the incorporeal world whose light is the Spirit of Life? When will our God be our food, He who is the place and the nourishment of those who love Him, from whom they suck his sweet pleasurable life? When will we no longer be wearied in our world because we will have found rest from painful passions? When, indeed, will our delight be within us because of the coveted appearance of our sweet King?

[1] cf. *The Book of Paradise*, ed. and trans. E. A. W. Budge (London, 1904) 2 vols., I, p. 766, # 537 (Arsenius).

[2] cf. Matt. 20:1.

[3] cf. Is. 60:20.

.هقيه حصحوا

1. انا اس: ح حصوم خح انا هوا وهوا انا حصحوم سا حاهلا
اهه .لهوم اهذ انحد لسال مهلهم الله :انحاهلا
حصحال حسحا وسؤا أحلا انا. هيقص حتس نهص مع
سهيزه الا وسا الز. الحقا ؤهذه سا انحبح وحبحا
لسبب اهحهم قالح انبلهه. حبح وقا مع الحهلهل
حوهتنو حهمه اهبلحا اهو .انحفه هوهسوحو:
ههحهه حصحتحو سوهه هسبح حصحهه*
2. هن حبهذ للهلهم قحيح الاسال حلهلل انهلهم .الهنه
لا هسو قالا مع اسبحه حهمهم: هبهحاه هسلهم اهوا
حن: حذح. هوهؤهصحه للكلا مهلهم لا نبم. اهلهم
هوهلنا هيهوبو: انهبهح لا انحصحا حلحصا اهوا
الؤا هوهوو :حلال ححوا اهوس هن حلهلم. وهوه الؤا
انكس سا حهلهم هسهه :هوهصحتسو هعيولو
حهقهوهوه. اهلهم سهوا حصحصم لا حقبلا: والسلا
مع سهما حاسقسا. اهلهم هن اهوا حهههو: مع
هسو في اهبهذ خهبهذ وحصم انحبهذ*

3. Blessed is he who from out of himself inhales the Fragrance of Life[4] in the marvelous revelations of the Father which appear in him always. Blessed is the one who gazes continually in himself at the vision in the mirror[5] of spiritual beings. Blessed is he who listens within himself and conceals the hidden mysteries of the Holy Spirit. Blessed is the one whose soul speaks with the stirring which is from the Spirit and whose ordinary thoughts are silenced by the force of his astonishment. Such is the amazement of the one whose mind is stilled from movements. In the new mystery, he hears simple praise within himself to rejoice with, in the calm silence of his mind and of his tongue. This is the one who has received the tongues of the Spirit from heaven.

[4] Fragrance of Life, *rîḥâ' d-ḥaye'*, see Letter 1.1. In the Discourses, John uses "scent of the Creator" to describe what can be perceived in those who through baptism and Eucharist become united to Christ: "Ravenous beasts, cattle, birds, and noxious reptiles live peaceably with him, because they sniff the scent of their Creator off him; likewise stones and sticks and all inanimate things are at peace with him; and what is more even the rebellious (demons) show obedience to him as a result of the fear of him that comes over them." See Discourse 23, H. 27b–28a. See also Beulay, ES, 175–178.

[5] Mirror (*maḥzîtâ*), see Letter 14.2.

3. ܒܗܝܡܢܘܬܐ ܕܐܠܗܐ ܗܘ ܕܐܡܪ ܠܐ ܬܣܒܪ ܒܝ ܐܦ ܒܚܕ ܡܢ ܐܢܫܐ ܕܐܝ ܒܗ ܐܦ ܐܢܐ ܒܥܠ ܡܫܟܚܐ ܕܐܢܐ ܐܫܬܘܩ ܠܗ ܘܐܬܐ ܐܠܝ ܒܫܠܡܐ ܘܐܫܪܐ ܠܒܝ ܕܝ ܐܢܐ ܐܬܝ ܠܟ

LETTER 46

1. There is nothing pleasurable or good like our God and there is no fragrance comparable to the sweetness of his knowledge. So that when the miracle of it had drawn me on, as someone has told me: "I stood senseless, and when I was revived I began to fly in the abyss and to breathe the Spirit of Life. I flew and was raised above everything, but I did not have strength and again I plunged and I retreated and did not attain anything and, dismayed, I remained in this way. Then again I was in it and with it, all in all and beyond all in its beautiful vision, yet I did not attain its length or its breadth. And again I turned and returned to the sweetness known to me."
2. I cry out in my excitement: "Alas, my Lord, who is capable for it? Blessed is the one who loves You, O Beloved of whom one is not able to be sated! Because while You have filled me greatly with Yourself, my hunger has increased in me with a desire of You that surpasses my strength." I say in my frantic folly, "O my Lord, who can endure it? Because while You have thrown me into your deep abyss that I might drink without measure, the inebriation of your love inflames me, and my heart burns with thirst for your watercourse."[1]

[1] Ps. 42:1.

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3. O bright darkness, adorning the face of the one who loves You to the amazement of the demons who cause upset! O dark enlightenment, illuminating the pupils of my eyes with its vision, to perceive all which is done in darkness in the inner rooms! The person in whose soul the tongue of your Spirit has murmured your holy mysteries, will understand these obscure things. And whoever has seen your beautiful manifestation within his heart and been stupefied, let him exult at the sight of the images which intimate the greatness of the revelations to him.
4. But I know my weakness and am silent. From now on, I will hold my peace because there is no one able to tell of your visions, O Seer of all. Glory to You from all, who crowns those who love Him, forever and ever. Amen.

3. ⲁⲟ ⲭⲙⲁⲗⲗⲁ ⲛⲁⲓⲥⲁ ⲁⲓⲥⲁ ⲥⲁⲩⲓⲍⲁ ⲁⲙⲁⲛⲁ ⲭⲁⲗⲁⲕⲏ ⲁⲓ ⲛⲁⲓⲥⲁ ⲁⲓⲥⲁ ⲁⲓⲥⲁ

LETTER 47

1. That which you asked me to write, my brother, does not belong to us who are lazy and remiss; but it is for those who because of their vigor and the diligence of their mind in marveling at God, have obtained the clear vision of the heart[1] which allows them always to gaze intently on the divine light insatiably, and to learn its mysteries by divine and mysterious vision and not by hearing. Nevertheless, it is fitting for whoever wishes to write about this world to begin with weeping and to end with weeping; not because of the world, but on account of its inhabitants, wearied unduly by its labors; not because of the world, but because of its friends who when absorbed by desire for it *become enemies of God*, according to the word of the Apostle.[2]
2. The Creator established this world for trial and instruction.[3] It is the place of labor from which the workers gather grains for their delight in the world without end,[4] or wretched tares for their torment with the wicked one who sowed them.[5] It is a place of commerce from which merchants gather life for their great rejoicing or death for their shame.

[1] cf. Eph. 1:18.

[2] James 4:4.

[3] This reflects the Two Ages doctrine of Theodore of Mopsuestia. See note to Letter 37.4 which also includes a reference to Cyrus of Edessa and his use of this doctrine.

[4] cf. Jn. 4:36.

[5] cf. Matt. 13:25.

وأتحدى معهم.

1. أنكر وجود أي حقائق حول: لا يوجد شيء يمكن مناقشته أو إنكاره. يشمل هذا الأشياء الملموسة مثل الجبال والأفكار المجردة مثل الحب: تحدى فلان فكرة أن الأرض مسطحة: لا يمكن إنكار الحقائق التاريخية الموثقة جيدًا. لا يوجد أي شك في أن الأرض كروية. أنكر أن الحكومة كانت تخفي الحقيقة عن الجمهور. لا يوجد أي دليل: لا يمكن إنكار وجود شيء ما

3. I too, with David, call blessed the one who always thinks about his departure and proceeds without blemish in the way of God.[6] Although the world is a place of shadow and darkness and the inhabitants grope in obscurity, yet all who by desire for God have shed its passions and appetites and have closed their eyes before the vapor of its hateful things which rises up and blinds the eyes of the intelligence: the light of the glory of God has appeared in their souls and they have acquired the wings of the Spirit from the living Spirit. They have flown and rested in the beautiful light in which Paul, the philosopher of the Spirit, says God dwells.[7]
4. They are no longer in this world, but in God. Nor are they workers of the flesh but of the Spirit.[8] Their mind does not think of the world, but their impulses originate in God, in silence and great wonder. Their intellects gain new strength[9] and always behold God. Instead of being human they have become divine, according to the foolish desire of their carnal father.[10] Therefore the world has been effaced from their hearts and they are enlightened by God. Henceforth they are considered crazy because they are smitten with desire of the beauty which captivates minds. They do not remember painful passions because they are dead to these things in Christ, the Slain Life-giver of all. And they have risen with Him beforehand in the glory of his Father, as the Apostle says, the interpreter of new things.[11]
5. Their soul is always inebriated with God's sweetness and knows no other desire outside of Him. Stillness, which pleases them, hearkens to the mysterious speech of the Spirit within them and they have restrained their mouths from speech which impedes. They have exchanged beauty for Beauty and intimacy for Intimacy.[12] They have exchanged pleasure for Pleasure and with the blood of their soul they have purchased Him who has redeemed them with his own blood.

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[6] cf. Ps. 15:2; 119:1.

[7] cf. 1 Tim. 6:16.

[8] cf. Rom. 8:5ff.

[9] cf. Eph. 4:23.

[10] cf. Gen. 3:5.

[11] cf. Rom. 6:5; Eph. 2:6; Col. 2:12.

[12] Beauty for Beauty and intimacy for Intimacy: an example of the transformational way John sees the ascetical life, not simply denial of human beauty or intimacy, but exchanging them for an even greater reality.

3. ܐܦ ܐܢܐ ܐܢܐ ܡܠܐ ܚܒܪ ܚܒܪ ܗܘ ܕܐܡܪ ܠܝ ܕܥܒܕ ܚܝܠ ܕܐܠܗܐ ܗܘ ܕܐܝܬ ܒܗ ܚܟܡܬܐ ܕܐܠܗܐ ܗܘ ܕܡܫܟܚ

6. Their mind has gone out from the world which confuses the wise, and they have penetrated into the place of thick darkness, to the multi-splendored light where the divine light is concealed[13] from the sight of all the living. Here, at the door of the mysteries, they stand amazed together with the Most High Powers. There is no shadow in their place because their Sun does not set.[14] There is no cessation[15] of their food because they are sustained by God's sweetness. Oh, these dead in Christ[16] who have lived by tasting the Life which does not know death !
7. Now, therefore, with an inflamed heart I will praise You, our glorious and beloved God, who loves those who seek Him and glorifies those who praise Him. My Lord, I do not know how I will name You. May I call You "God"? You have said that You are without a name.[17] Therefore all titles and names are inferior to your greatness. How then will I name You with my images, for the joy of those who seek You? The revealed names which You have given for your praise, these are granted to everyone; but that hidden Name, which in your love You gave to me mysteriously that I might speak it with You in secret,[18] You have hidden from word and image. You have filled me with reverence, and I dare not declare it to my friends!

[13] cf. Ex. 20:21; 24:15, 16.
[14] Rev. 22:5.
[15] A variant from ms H is used here, from the root *pâš*, instead of *pašeq*.
[16] cf. 1 Thess. 4:16.
[17] cf. Gen. 32:29; Ex. 3:14.
[18] cf. Mt. 6:6.

6. بعد تحميد الحكيم المختار على ما أوحى إلى أخيه الأبرار، وبعد فإنك سألت أن أكتب لك كتابا في الأمر الذي لا يسع أحدا جهله، ولا يعذر عبد في تركه، وهو ما يجب على كل مسلم ومسلمة من معرفة ربه وما يعبده به، وما يؤمن به ويصدق، وما يكفر به ويجحد، وما يحل له ويحرم عليه، وما يأتي من الأمور وما يذر، فأقول وبالله التوفيق: إن الله تعالى خلق الخلق لعبادته، وأمرهم بطاعته، ونهاهم عن معصيته، وأمرهم أن يعبدوه ولا يشركوا به شيئا، وأن يؤمنوا به وبرسله، ويعملوا بما جاءت به رسله، ويقيموا الصلاة، ويؤتوا الزكاة، ويصوموا رمضان، ويحجوا البيت، ويجاهدوا في سبيله، ويأمروا بالمعروف وينهوا عن المنكر، ويبروا الوالدين، ويصلوا الأرحام، ويحسنوا إلى الجار واليتيم والمسكين وابن السبيل والمملوك من الآدميين والبهائم، وأن يحبوا للناس ما يحبون لأنفسهم، ويكرهوا لهم ما يكرهون لها، وأن يتوبوا إليه من جميع ما نهاهم عنه، ويستغفروه مما فرط منهم من الذنوب والآثام، وأن يعلموا أن الله تعالى لا يغفر أن يشرك به، ويغفر ما دون ذلك لمن يشاء، وأن من مات مشركا به فقد حرم عليه الجنة، ومأواه النار، وبئس المصير، وأن من مات مؤمنا به غير تائب من ذنوبه فأمره إلى الله تعالى، إن شاء عذبه بقدر ذنوبه، وإن شاء عفا عنه برحمته، وأدخله الجنة بفضله، وأن من مات مؤمنا به تائبا من ذنوبه فإن الله تعالى يتوب عليه ويغفر له ما كان منه، وأن من تاب إلى الله توبة نصوحا ندم على ما فرط منه، وأقلع عنه في الحال، وعزم على أن لا يعود إليه أبدا، وأدى إلى الله تعالى ما كان عليه من الفرائض، وتحلل من المظالم، ورد إلى أهلها ما كان في يده منها، وأن من فعل ذلك فإن الله تعالى يقبل توبته

8. Glory to You, Father and Lord of my life, who have made me the link[19] of all creatures that in me all creatures might lift up your praise. Nothing is comparable to your love. Only worthy of your praise is that one who has exchanged everything, including his life, for your love. Your love makes the loved ones your sons. There is no one who has despised the world fully, except the one whom your fire burns within his heart. There is no one who sees your great glory within himself, except the one whose meditation is always on You. There is no one who hears continually in himself the mysteries of your Spirit, except the one whose soul is always speaking with You. There is no one wise in an understanding of You, except the one who has removed the wisdom of the world from his heart.[20]
9. Blessed is the one who bears your wonder in his heart at all times because he sees You in himself always. Blessed is the one who has acquired You as a treasure within his soul in this world, for he will take delight in You forever and ever. Blessed is the one who fixes his eyes on your dazzling glory in his soul, for his being shines with your beauty at all times. Blessed is the one in whose heart your Spirit speaks and grants his soul all its petitions.

[19] Link (*essârâ*): man's role in the universe is to be a bond of love by his very nature—soul and body—"that the creation might not be bound to him by need alone, but also by kinship of nature." Quote of Theodore of Mopsuestia found in Norris, *Manhood and Christ*, 146–148. See also She'mun the Graceful on man as the bond of all creation in Bettiolo, *Violenza e Grazia*, 47.

[20] cf. 1 Cor. 1:20; 3:19.

8. ﻛﻢ ﻣﻮﺣﺪ ﻟﻪﺫﺍ ﺳﺒﺤﻪﻭ ﻭﺗﻌﺎﻟﻰ ﻋﻤﺎ ﻳﺼﻔﻪ ﻭﻻ ﺣﻮﻝ. ﻭﻻ ﺣﻮﻝ ﻭﻻ ﻗﻮﺓ ﺇﻻ ﺑﺎﻟﻠﻪ ﺍﻟﻌﻠﻲ ﺍﻟﻌﻈﻴﻢ. ﻛﻢ ﻧﻌﻤﺔ ﻟﻪ ﻋﻠﻴﻨﺎ ﻭﻛﻢ ﻗﺪﻡ ﻟﻪ ﻣﻦ ﺍﻟﻨﻌﻢ ﻭﺍﻟﻤﻨﻦ ﻭﻫﻮ ﻣﻊ ﺫﻟﻚ ﻳﺒﺘﻠﻴﻨﺎ ﻭﻳﺨﺘﺒﺮﻧﺎ ﻭﻳﺮﻳﺪ ﻣﻨﺎ ﺃﻥ ﻧﺸﻜﺮﻩ ﻭﻧﺤﻤﺪﻩ ﻭﻧﺜﻨﻲ ﻋﻠﻴﻪ ﻭﻧﻤﺠﺪﻩ ﻭﻧﻌﻈﻤﻪ ﻭﻧﻘﺮ ﻟﻪ ﺑﺎﻟﻌﺒﻮﺩﻳﺔ ﻭﻧﺨﻀﻊ ﻟﻪ ﻭﻧﺴﺘﻜﻴﻦ ﻟﻪ ﻭﻧﺘﻮﺍﺿﻊ ﻟﻪ ﻭﻧﺨﺎﻓﻪ ﻭﻧﺮﺟﻮﻩ ﻭﻧﺤﺒﻪ ﻭﻧﺨﺸﺎﻩ ﻭﻧﺘﻘﻴﻪ ﻭﻧﺘﻮﻛﻞ ﻋﻠﻴﻪ ﻭﻧﺴﺘﻌﻴﻨﻪ ﻭﻧﺴﺘﻬﺪﻳﻪ ﻭﻧﺴﺘﻐﻔﺮﻩ ﻭﻧﺴﺘﻌﻴﺬ ﺑﻪ ﻣﻦ ﺷﺮﻭﺭ ﺃﻧﻔﺴﻨﺎ ﻭﻣﻦ ﺳﻴﺌﺎﺕ ﺃﻋﻤﺎﻟﻨﺎ ﻭﻧﺸﻬﺪ ﺃﻥ ﻻ ﺇﻟﻪ ﺇﻻ ﺍﻟﻠﻪ ﻭﺣﺪﻩ ﻻ ﺷﺮﻳﻚ ﻟﻪ ﻭﻧﺸﻬﺪ ﺃﻥ ﻣﺤﻤﺪﺍً ﻋﺒﺪﻩ ﻭﺭﺳﻮﻟﻪ ﺻﻠﻰ ﺍﻟﻠﻪ ﻋﻠﻴﻪ ﻭﻋﻠﻰ ﺁﻟﻪ ﻭﺻﺤﺒﻪ ﻭﺳﻠﻢ ❖ ﺍﻟﺨﺎﺗﻤﺔ

9. ﻭﻫﻲ ﺍﻟﺘﻲ ﻛﺘﺒﻬﺎ ﻟﻠﺸﻴﺦ ﻋﺒﺪ ﺍﻟﻘﺎﺩﺭ ﺍﻟﺠﻴﻼﻧﻲ ﻭﻫﻲ ﻣﻦ ﺃﺟﻞ ﺍﻟﻜﺘﺐ ﺍﻟﺘﻲ ﺍﻋﺘﻤﺪﻫﺎ ﺍﻟﺸﻴﺦ ﻭﺍﻟﻌﻤﻞ ﺑﻬﺎ ﻭﻫﻲ ﻣﻦ ﺃﻛﺜﺮ ﺍﻟﻜﺘﺐ ﺍﻟﺘﻲ ﺍﻧﺘﺸﺮﺕ ﻭﻋﻤﻢ ﺍﻟﻨﻔﻊ ﺑﻬﺎ ﻭﻫﻲ ﻣﻦ ﺃﻭﺳﻊ ﺍﻟﻜﺘﺐ ﻭﺃﻛﺜﺮﻫﺎ ﻓﻮﺍﺋﺪ ﻭﻣﻨﺎﻓﻊ ﻭﻫﻲ ﺍﻟﺘﻲ ﺍﺷﺘﻬﺮ ﺍﻟﺸﻴﺦ ﺑﺎﻟﺪﻋﻮﺓ ﺇﻟﻰ ﺍﻟﻠﻪ ﻭﺍﻟﺘﺮﻏﻴﺐ ﻓﻴﻬﺎ ﻭﻫﻲ ﺍﻟﺘﻲ ﺍﺷﺘﻬﺮ ﺑﻬﺎ ﺍﻟﺸﻴﺦ

10. Whose intellect is in darkness without your light, let him compose a lamentation over his misery and I will bear his distress with him. O wise one, close your eyes to the world before the sun sets on your daily labor. For angels draw those who obey them to the inheritance of life, and when they have finished their course and the time draws near for their departure from here, the angels lead their souls away and join them to their troops. Thus they enjoy[21] the glory of God until the day of the resurrection of their bodies arrives, when God will become their delight. But those who have done the will of the impure demons, at the time of their going forth these demons will lead their souls to the fearful and terrible place of their inheritance. And thus in the blindness of ignorance, they will remain until the resurrection when they will come to judgment together with the rebellious demons.
11. Love everyone in separation from every man.[22] Hate all which is hateful in your self but not in others. Anyone who hates sinners is abhorrent to the Lord. While you have time, show penitence so as to blot out your sins. Pour forth tears before your Lord, lest He turn his face from you on the day when all who love Him await his glorious appearance, to take delight in Him forever. To Him be praise from the mouth of all the rational beings, and as for us, let us beseech his mercy! Amen.

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[21] Here John speaks of the joy of the soul after death, something condemned by Patriarch Timothy I who at the Synod in 786/787 denied any sense perception by the soul after death during the "sleep of the soul" (*hypnopsychia*). Timothy sided with earlier writers such as Aphrahat, Ephrem, and to some degree Narsai, who were less influenced by Origen and Evagrius than were the later mystical writers: Dadisho, Joseph Hazzaya, and John Dalyatha. On the relation of the soul to the body after death, see A. Guillaumont, "Sources de la Doctrine de Joseph Hazzaya," *OS* 3 (1958): 5–24, esp. 10–12. See also Beulay, ES, 488–510 which includes a complete translation of John's Discourse dedicated to the condition of the soul after death.

[22] As noted in Letter 18.42, see Evagrius, "Chapters on Prayer" # 124: "A monk is a man who is separated from all and who is in harmony with all." See Bamberger, *Evagrius*, 76. Also found in Isaac of Nineveh, Homily 65, see Bedjan, *Mar Isaacus*, 457.

10. ܒܗ ܒܫܡܐ ܕܡܪܝ ܥܠܡܐ ܕܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܠܐ ܬܚܫ ܠܡ ܚܕ ܡܢ ܐܠܗܐ ܐܠܐ ܐܢ ܐܫܬܟܚ ܒܟ ܕܒܪ ܚܛܝܬܐ ܘܐܢ ܠܐ ܬܗܘܐ ܒܥܝܢܝ

LETTER 50

[On the remembrance and thought of God and a constant gazing on Him.]

1. My brother, concerning the thought of God which you asked me to write you about, I do not understand your request. If it concerns the constant remembrance of Him, I know that the thought of Him always arises in your heart for your delight and for the destruction of passions and thoughts.[1] And if you are seeking instructions about gazing on Him, I am sure that your understanding has been enlightened by the vision of his glory and has gone beyond all need of indications.
2. But since we are in the world of variations,[2] and now and then because of happenings, temptations, and acts of Providence to reprimand us, sometimes the remembrance of God is cut off from our heart, and our souls are deprived of his vision, and we forget to think about Him. So we have need of indications to bring us back to remembering God[3] and gazing on Him. According to my weakness, I am setting down notes for persons weak like me, that by them they might grow strong in the glory of God mighty forevermore.

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[1] Thoughts (*hušŝâbê*), the sense here is bad thoughts as in *logismoi* or distractions, see Guillaumont, "Démon," 201–203. Not to be confused with insights (*sukkâlê*) which arise in the mind while reading Scripture or during prayer, a term often used by Isaac, see Alfeyev, *Spiritual World of Isaac*, 229–236.

[2] Variations (*šuhlâpê*), see Letter 37.1.

[3] For John, remembrance of God (*ʿuhdânâ dalâhâ*) is a directing of the intellect (*hawnâ*) to God present in the heart. In his use of heart there is Macarian influence: a sense of the heart as the spiritual center of a person, including intelligence as well as feelings. It is the place where the Holy Spirit dwells and where one meets God. One must work hard to cultivate its "earth" (Letter 50.19) and to guard it carefully. Guarding is done by "remembrance of God," thus penetrating within and remaining motionless before the depth. John describes this at length in Discourse 20, "On the self-revelation of Christ," Vat. 124, 350a–351a. See Beulay, "Lettre XV," 278–279. See also S. P. Brock, "Spirituality of the Heart in Syriac Tradition," *Harp* 1 (1988): 93–115. Remembrance of God is also found frequently in the writings of Philoxenus. For him the soul is dead without the remembrance of God and one is no longer even able to hear the "cries" of the words of Scripture (Hom. 1:5). Many other references can be found in the Index. See Lemoine, *Philoxène*. However, he, like John the Solitary, is less interested in monastic life than John of Dalyatha and concentrates more on the simple life of faith of the baptized. Even his definitions of *ʿuhdânâ dalâhâ* tend to reflect this difference. But the tradition is the same.

وسقعبو: حلا حوهوبا وزبا وحاحلحا. ومزا امبا وحه.

1. حلا وزبا وحاحلحا وبلحلحا اس حمحلحا حب: لا نبه انا وزا وحخلم. ل حلا حوهوبه امبا: نبه انا انا نبه: امبا مزوهوبه حلا ل. وحخلم انا وزا وححلحا لمحملحه: ومممومححب مبه وححب حوحه نحه ححلحا وتبه حمقعبا. حوه وزمنب لما لحذ الاسقبا ول. وحه وزمنب لما لحذ الاسقبا ول. مفحه انا وزابزا: ومحبه الزسا وحبه مجه حلحلحا مبه حلا لسقبو ❖
2. الا مله وححلحا لحمحلحا وحقسا لحلحا: وحه حا حوحه مه حا حوحه: و

3. That heaven and earth and all that is in them are full of God; that He passes through all and that his Nature is stretched out through all the natures, like the sun in the air: many know this by hearing of it. Fewer know it from snatches in books, but only rarely is it known from the vision of purity: this purity which takes delight in blessing and not in senseless words.
4. Let a person look on the immensity of God which covers all and passes over all. This constant remembrance of Him is certainly a great thing: it destroys the passions, defeats the demons, enlightens the intellect, and purifies the heart. But better than this is that a person seek his Life within himself. All the worlds may be full of Life, but if he is empty of it, what profit from what is outside? And if he is full of Life, what harm can death do to him from the outside?
5. So then look at God within yourself, how *God is light*.[4] For his Nature is a glorious, many-splendored light. He manifests the light of his Nature to those who love Him in all the worlds—that is, his glory, not his Nature. And He changes the image of those who see it, to the likeness of his glory. Look within and see Him in your being, united to you as fire to iron within the furnace, and as moisture in your body.
6. When you see Him thus united to you, lay yourself bare before your understanding, so that He alone may be visible to it, if the power of its vision is capable. And if it is not able to do this, let it remain in continual remembrance: that is, that one's intellect be gathered to himself by the remembrance of God and his gaze be on Him. Our Fathers call this the guard of the intellect, and there is nothing more lofty than this among all the virtues and ministries.

[4] 1 Jn. 1:5.

3. ومحمد: صلى الله عليه وسلم. فإن الله تعالى قد أمر بالصلاة عليه في كتابه العزيز، فقال: إن الله وملائكته يصلون على النبي. يا أيها الذين آمنوا صلوا عليه وسلموا تسليما. وقد ثبت في الصحيح أن من صلى على النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم صلاة واحدة صلى الله عليه بها عشرا ❖

4. وبهذا قد ظهر لك أن الصلاة على النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم: هي الثناء عليه. وطلب الرحمة له من ربه عز وجل: وهذا هو معنى الصلاة من الله على عباده. ومن الملائكة: الدعاء. ومن الآدميين: هو التقرب إلى الله تعالى بذلك. وهذا هو الذي يليق بالنبي صلى الله عليه وسلم. وهو الذي أمرنا الله به. وهو الذي كان يفعله النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم. وهو الذي كان يعلمه أصحابه رضي الله عنهم. وهو الذي كان يأمرهم به. وهو الذي كان يرغبهم فيه. وهو الذي كان يحثهم عليه. وهو الذي كان يقول: من صلى علي صلاة واحدة صلى الله عليه بها عشرا. وهو الذي كان يقول: من صلى علي واحدة صلى الله عليه عشرا. وهو الذي كان يقول: أولى الناس بي يوم القيامة أكثرهم علي صلاة. وهو الذي كان يقول: كل دعاء محجوب حتى يصلى على محمد. وهو الذي كان يقول: البخيل من ذكرت عنده فلم يصل علي. وهو الذي كان يقول: رغم أنف رجل ذكرت عنده فلم يصل علي. وهو الذي كان يقول: رغم أنف رجل دخل عليه رمضان ثم انسلخ قبل أن يغفر له. وهو الذي كان يقول: رغم أنف رجل أدرك أبويه عند الكبر أو أحدهما فلم يدخل الجنة. وهو الذي كان يقول: رغم أنف رجل لم يصل علي إذا ذكرت عنده. وهو الذي كان يقول: من صلى علي مرة واحدة صلى الله عليه بها عشر صلوات. وهو الذي كان يقول: من صلى علي صلاة واحدة صلى الله عليه بها مائة رحمة. وهو الذي كان يقول: من صلى علي صلاة واحدة صلى الله عليه بها ألف رحمة. وهو الذي كان يقول: من صلى علي صلاة واحدة صلى الله عليه بها كل رحمة في السماوات والأرض. وهو الذي كان يقول: من صلى علي صلاة واحدة كتب الله له بها ألف حسنة ومحا عنه ألف سيئة ورفع له ألف درجة. وهو الذي كان يقول: من صلى علي صلاة واحدة صلى الله عليه بها ألف صلاة وملأ ما بين السماء والأرض من نور الله. وهو الذي كان يقول: من صلى علي صلاة واحدة صلى الله عليه بها كل صلاة صلاها الخلائق من بدء الدنيا إلى انقضائها. وهو الذي كان يقول: من صلى علي صلاة واحدة صلى الله عليه بها ألف صلاة صلاها الملائكة المقربون وأنبياء الله ورسله. وهو الذي كان يقول: من صلى علي صلاة واحدة صلى الله عليه بها كل صلاة صلاها الملائكة السماوات والأرض

7. If you are inquiring about the vision of the glorious Hypostases, no creature is able to speak concerning this, even though the pure see each of Them in his limpid purity. Even if the visual power be found in them, in accordance with their own strength, there is not power in their natures to make this known by word. Nevertheless, we put forth scanty notes here, to enlighten those in the darkness like us.
8. Look at the perceptible sea from which our Fathers have given us many examples of comparisons to God, even though his Nature is above all comparisons, signs, and examples. Consider, so to speak, the Father of all as the nature of this perceptible sea, the Son more adorable than all as the moisture of the water, and the Spirit more glorious than all as the movement of the water in the sea.
9. Who can separate the powers of the sea from its nature, such that the water of the sea be without moisture and constant movement? Who is able to take the stirring of the sea from it and make it stand alone, or the water and the humidity likewise by themselves? Who will see one of these realities without the three which are one? When you see three, you see one, and when you see one, they are three with its powers: the powers are not separated from the nature, nor the nature from its powers.
10. Likewise, reflect on the glorious Nature of that noetic Sea of overflowing and multi-splendored light, and its extension in all and above all in an indescribable way. Think of the Father as the Nature, and the Son his understanding, and the Spirit the Life united to the Nature which is Life. And if the powers of the perceptible sea cannot be separated from it, and if none of them can be mentioned on its own, who is able to assert this about that glorious Nature of the Holy Trinity, thrice glorified.

7. ولكن إذا كان الأمر: أن الخلق استحق العقوبة الذي كان له الحجة عليهم بحكم قدرة ربه أو بحجة الخلق عليه بحكم سبب العذر الذي أو الإكراه عليه بحكم: فإن الله تعالى حكم بالعدل ولا يظلم أحداً ❖

8. وبه حصل أن الله تعالى: الذي لا يعلم شيئاً إلا بعد وقوعه في علمه أو لا. الذي لا يتغير علمه بحال ولا يحتاج إلى أن يعلم شيئاً قبل أن يكون: فإن الله تعالى الذي لا يعلم شيئاً إلا بعد وقوعه في علمه أو لا: فإن الله تعالى الذي لا يعلم شيئاً إلا بعد وقوعه في علمه أو لا: فإن الله تعالى الذي لا يعلم شيئاً إلا بعد وقوعه ❖

9. وبه يعلم أيضاً: علمه في كل وقت بجميع ما يكون: فإن الله تعالى لا يعلم شيئاً إلا بعد وقوعه لا قبله. أو كما لا يعلم الشيء المتحرك إلا بعد حركته: فكذلك الله تعالى بعلمه الذي لا يتغير: لا يعلم شيئاً إلا بعد وقوعه. أو كما لا يعلم الساكن إلا بعد سكونه. فإن الله تعالى لا يعلم شيئاً إلا بعد وقوعه ❖

10. وكما أن الله تعالى الذي لا يعلم شيئاً إلا بعد وقوعه: فكذلك الله تعالى الذي لا يقدر شيئاً إلا بعد وقوعه. أو كما لا يقدر المتحرك على حركته إلا بعد حركته. فإن الله تعالى الذي لا يقدر شيئاً إلا بعد وقوعه. فإن الله تعالى الذي لا يقدر شيئاً إلا بعد وقوعه: فإن الله تعالى الذي لا يقدر شيئاً إلا بعد وقوعه ❖

11. Who is able to talk about the adorable Persons, about each of them separate from the others? For while They are called Three, They are one, and while one, this One is thrice glorified. It is not possible to see One without the Three, nor to see the Three except as One: just as the perceptible sea is not seen or spoken of as one without three.
12. You are not able to say concerning the sea that it has powers other than these two (natural and spiritual). But if you were to say that there is a place where its water is sweet and another where it is bitter, observe also that God, while being good and sweet, deals vigorously with those who deserve punishment. And while his friends experience him as sweet and gentle, these who oppose him know him as bitter and punitive. Nevertheless these are operations and not powers. There are only two powers: of the spiritual sea and of the perceptible sea, these of which we have spoken.
13. Of the two, the perceptible sea possesses innumerable operations, such as the action of generating multiple natures, making them grow, and nourishing them. See how the adorable Majesty also has generated all the natures, making them grow, providing for them, and vivifying them, and will regenerate the rational beings in the likeness of his Glory.
14. The perceptible sea is life for natural beings: from it they drink and provide for all their needs; but it is also found to bring death to many. The spiritual Sea is Life and Vivifier of all, it is the light and stability of all the worlds and of all natures. Even so, the wicked in the world to come will consider it as deadly and dark; just as the sea for those who have not grown up in it, and fall into it, is found to be deadly and deprived of light. And as the sea offers riches, honor, and glory to the wise merchants who know how to navigate its waves; whereas those who do not know how to proceed in an orderly way strive until they fall into the abyss and touch its depths, gaining death and privation of light from it: so also it is of the spiritual Sea.

11. ولا تحسبن الذين قتلوا في سبيل الله أمواتا بل أحياء عند ربهم يرزقون. فرحين بما آتاهم الله من فضله ويستبشرون بالذين لم يلحقوا بهم من خلفهم ألا خوف عليهم ولا هم يحزنون. يستبشرون بنعمة من الله وفضل وأن الله لا يضيع أجر المؤمنين. ❖

12. ولا تحسبن الذين يبخلون بما آتاهم الله من فضله هو خيرا لهم بل هو شر لهم سيطوقون ما بخلوا به يوم القيامة ولله ميراث السماوات والأرض والله بما تعملون خبير. ❖

13. لقد سمع الله قول الذين قالوا إن الله فقير ونحن أغنياء سنكتب ما قالوا وقتلهم الأنبياء بغير حق ونقول ذوقوا عذاب الحريق. ذلك بما قدمت أيديكم وأن الله ليس بظلام للعبيد. ❖

14. الذين قالوا إن الله عهد إلينا ألا نؤمن لرسول حتى يأتينا بقربان تأكله النار قل قد جاءكم رسل من قبلي بالبينات وبالذي قلتم فلم قتلتموهم إن كنتم صادقين. فإن كذبوك فقد كذبت رسل من قبلك جاءوا بالبينات والزبر والكتاب المنير. كل نفس ذائقة الموت وإنما توفون أجوركم يوم القيامة فمن زحزح عن النار وأدخل الجنة فقد فاز وما الحياة الدنيا إلا متاع الغرور. ❖

15. Those who learn an orderly way, from the wise who ride the waves of its light, proceed on a straight course according to the indications which they have received, until also they become accustomed and have been instructed by the blessed Sea to search into the depths and to gain for themselves life without end and light which does not darken. For these it is found to be life, light, sweetness, and joy. It enriches them with that which is its own: glorifying, magnifying, and honoring them. It inclines to their supplication, and answers all which they ask. It makes them see its glory, and they exult. It gives them strength, and they conquer demons. It subjects creatures to them, and they obey their word. It shows them its ministers, and they take on their likeness by their crying "Holy," and they mix with their ranks and live forever and ever. They become sharers in its mysteries, knowing hidden realities. They are filled by its Spirit and search the depths of its wisdom.
16. But those who boldly wish to examine the eternal Nature of the Essence obtain their own destruction by their inquiry, and for their trouble they gain misery, bitterness, and groaning. Woe to the inquirer[5] and whoever listens to him! The one who examines inherits distress and separation from God. Humble your spirit, O inquirer, and do not cut your soul off from life. Do not fall into the Sea to your ruin, but arrange and measure your journey and gain eternal Life from it. Do not fall from the boat rigged by the wise, lest your drowning be immediate. You will not find a means of climbing out if you fall into the abyss without the boat or skiff which the wise have constructed. If by searching you are not able to understand your own composition in the womb and how you came to be in it, and if you are not able to know yourself, how do you dare search the Essence of the Nature of your Creator? Impious explorer, humble your pride lest you fall into the abyss where no prop is found to stop your descent.

[5] Inquirer (*bâsôyâ*), see Introduction.

15. ܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܡܪܝ ܐܢ ܐܝܬ ܠܟ ܗܝܡܢܘܬܐ ܒܫܠܡܐ ܕܐܦ ܐܢ ܐܝܬ ܠܟ ܫܘܠܛܢ ܒܥܘܠܡ ܗܢܐ ܠܡ ܬܗܘܐ ܠܟ ܐܠܐ ܠܫܥܬܐ ܕܚܕܐ ܒܗ ܢܬܬܠ ܠܟ ܫܘܠܛܢ ܥܡ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܒܫܡܝܐ ܘܒܥܠܡܐ ܕܐܬܐ ܘܢܚܝ ܒܗ ܠܥܠܡ ܥܠܡܝܢ ܐܡܝܢ ܘܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܡܪܝ ܐܢ ܐܝܬ ܠܟ ܫܘܠܛܢ ܥܡ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܒܫܡܝܐ ܘܒܥܠܡܐ ܕܐܬܐ ܘܢܚܝ ܒܗ ܠܥܠܡ ܥܠܡܝܢ ܐܡܝܢ ܘܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܡܪܝ ܐܢ ܐܝܬ ܠܟ ܫܘܠܛܢ ܥܡ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܒܫܡܝܐ ܘܒܥܠܡܐ ܕܐܬܐ ܘܢܚܝ ܒܗ ܠܥܠܡ ܥܠܡܝܢ ܐܡܝܢ ✧ ܐܠܗܢ

16. ܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܡܪܝ ܐܢ ܐܝܬ ܠܟ ܫܘܠܛܢ ܥܡ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܒܫܡܝܐ ܘܒܥܠܡܐ ܕܐܬܐ ܘܢܚܝ ܒܗ ܠܥܠܡ ܥܠܡܝܢ ܐܡܝܢ ✧ ܐܠܗܢ

17. O you who love God, wherever you see the wicked talking about investigating the Nature of the Essence, flee! Flee from there lest their clamor, which has killed those who hear it, fall on your ears. But carry the remembrance of Him in your heart, and you will be blessed. Look on Him in the wonder of his Majesty and you will not die.[6] Look in yourself and see Him within you. Fix your eyes in your heart, and from it He will shine forth over your soul. If you look there constantly, there you will find the Kingdom; that is, you will see God within you who is your Kingdom,[7] if you fix your eyes and if your heart is pure[8] from all blemish.
18. But if your heart is defiled by the passions of sin, whenever you look within yourself, darkness will block your vision. Nevertheless, by your constant gazing, your heart is made pure, day by day. And your intellect finds a support, even without seeing, and feels enjoyment and is at rest. No one fixes his eyes constantly within himself without acquiring in a short time God-seeing purity. The one who looks on God within himself, cleans his soul of dirt and the devil cannot sow passions in his heart. But if they are sown, they perish quickly; the remembrance of God and that of the passions cannot be found in the same dwelling.
19. The mind which seeks God in itself, its substance becomes a mirror[9] in which God becomes visible to it. Glory to that One who reveals his glory in the mind which is eager for the vision of Him, so as to be seen by it for its great rejoicing! For He does not come to it from elsewhere to become visible but was hidden and concealed in it. And when He sees that it toils and is worn out searching for Him and that it is ever thinking of Him and athirst for the vision of Him, He makes his glorious beauty to appear in it which was hidden in it, and comforts it. This is the one who has found the Kingdom which was concealed within him.[10] This is the treasure hidden in the field for which one who finds it immediately abandons all he possesses.[11] Behold one who has made the earth of his soul an excellent portion and it has yielded fruits from the good Plowman's seed, a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty![12] To Him be glory, forever and ever! Amen.

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[6] cf. Ex. 33:20.
[7] cf. Lk. 17:21.
[8] cf. Matt. 5:8.
[9] Mirror (*mazḥîtâ*).
[10] cf. Lk. 17:21.
[11] cf. Matt. 13:44.
[12] cf. Matt. 13:8.

17. ܐܝ ܡܢܝ ܠܗ ܠܡܪܝ ܐܡܪ ܐܒܪܗ ܕܐܡ ܠܡܪܝ ܠܐ ܐܫܬܟܚ ܐܢܫ ܕܐܠܗ ܐܠܐ ܒܫܡ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܒܪ ܡܪܝܡ. ܐܠܗܐ ܗܘ ܕܒܪܝܬ ܟܠ ܒܪܝܬܐ. ܐܠܗܐ ܗܘ ܕܐܡܪ ܠܐ ܐܬܝ ܠܡ ܐܠܐ ܒܫܡ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܒܪ ܡܪܝܡ

LETTER 51

[On the vision of God]

1. A brother told me: "Indeed when the remembrance of Paradise lifted up my soul to observe it, in the vision my soul became like Adam and was amazed. And again from there my soul was led by the power of the Spirit to marvel at the living and vivifying Paradise whose limit is unreachable and whose delight I find within me; then I was stunned by the diligent ascetics in whom is still found, while meditating on Paradise, an impulse arousing desire for a vision of that earth-bound paradise."
2. Blessed is he who fixes his eyes on You constantly, O my Paradise who appear to me within me! O Tree of Life, You inflame my heart every moment with the desire for You,[1] and change my countenance by the power of your love, holding my intellect in astonishment at the rays of your beauty. Blessed is that one who seeks You in himself always: for from Himself, Life flows for him[2] for his delight. Blessed is the one who carries in his heart the remembrance of You at all times, for also his soul is inebriated with your sweetness! Blessed is he who gazes upon You continually within himself, for his heart is enlightened so as to see hidden things. Blessed is the one who seeks You in his being, for his own heart grows warm with your fire, and his flesh with his bones burns in its purifying fervor.

[1] The text here has 3rd person sing., whereas I have used a 2nd person sing. to translate: desire for him/you; power of his/your love; rays of his/your beauty.

[2] cf. Jn. 7:38.

الحالة الأولى

1. إذا تم إعداد حساب في التطبيق وتم تسجيل الخروج، فإن الخطوة الأولى هي: تشغيل التطبيق. ستظهر شاشة تسجيل الدخول. إذا كان لديك حساب، فأدخل بريدك الإلكتروني وكلمة المرور. إذا نسيت كلمة المرور، فاستخدم رابط استعادة كلمة المرور. إذا لم يكن لديك حساب، فاختر إنشاء حساب جديد.
2. بعد تسجيل الدخول، ستظهر الشاشة الرئيسية. في أعلى الشاشة، ستجد شريط التنقل. إذا كنت في أي مكان في التطبيق، فيمكنك العودة إلى الشاشة الرئيسية بالضغط على أيقونة المنزل. ستجد أيضاً أيقونة الإشعارات، حيث ستظهر التنبيهات الجديدة. إذا ضغطت على أيقونة الإشعارات، فستظهر قائمة بالإشعارات الأخيرة. إذا ضغطت على أي إشعار، فسيتم نقلك إلى الصفحة المتعلقة بذلك الإشعار.

3. Blessed is the one whose thoughts are silenced by reflection on You, for the Spirit pours forth streams of Life on him for his own delight and for those who thirst for the vision of You. Blessed is the one whose cheeks are burning with the tears of your love, for by its drops the rational lands which burn with wicked fire are moistened so that they might produce fruits of joy which those who consume them do not die! Blessed is the one who mixes care about You with his sleep, for the demons who defile the lazy with foul images depart quaking from him. Blessed is the one who makes his bed in the incessant admiration of your mysteries and dwells silently in it in the wonder they produce, for to gladden the heart of the diligent it also gives forth the Fragrance of Life[3] produced by your Holy Spirit, Guardian of the purity of those who love Him. Blessed is the one who forgets about worldly converse to speak with You, for all his needs are filled by You.
4. You are his food and drink; You are his joy and his exultation. You are his garment, in your glory his nakedness is clothed.[4] You are his dwelling and his resting place, and he always goes within You to be protected. You are his sun and his day, and in your light he sees hidden mysteries. You are the father who generated him, and like a child he calls You: *Father*![5] You placed the Spirit of your Son in his heart,[6] and He[7] gave him the confidence to ask of You[8] all which is yours, as a son to his father. He is always in your company, because apart from You he knows no father.

[3] Fragrance of Life (*rîhâ' d-haye'*).

[4] cf. 2 Cor. 5:3. See Brock, "Robe of Glory."

[5] Rom. 8:15.

[6] cf. Rom. 5:5; 2 Cor. 1:22.

[7] The pronoun here is feminine; for a discussion of gender issues concerning Spirit (*rûhâ*), see below note # 18.

[8] cf. 1 Jn. 5:14.

3. ܗܘ ܐ ܡܠܝ ܡܫܟ ܡܐܡܪ ܕܐ ܡܐܡܪ ܐ ܕܐ ܡܐ ܕܐ ܡܐ ܕܐ ܡ

5. You are united to his soul; You are mingled with his members; You shine in his intellect and take it captive to make him marvel at the vision of You. You silence the stirrings of his soul by the movement of your love and You transform his carnal desire by your great sweetness.[9] He smells your holy fragrance, as a child breathes the scent of his father. The fragrance of your grace exudes from his body, as the scent of his wet-nurse from a child. You always console him with the vision of Yourself; when he eats, he sees You in his food; when he drinks, You sparkle in his drink; when he weeps, You appear in his tears. Wherever he looks, he sees You there: so that everywhere You increase his bliss, and there is no one who does not call him blessed, except the one who is utterly deprived of blessing.
6. My Lord and my Life, fellowship with You has captivated my mind because besides You I have no companion. What will I do? My soul thirsts for You and my flesh seeks You.[10] However, an ascent to You is found in conversing with You, and a vision of your countenance is given through meditating on You.

[9] Rather than a suppression of passions in the Evagrian way, John sees a transformation (*šuhlâpâ*) which explains perhaps why the technical term for *apatheia/lâ hâšôšûtâ* occurs only once in his writings. In this emphasis on transformation, John is closer to Gregory of Nyssa and Pseudo-Dionysius than to Evagrius; see Andrew Louth, *Denys the Areopagite* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1989), 46. Beulay considers transformation to be a defining theme throughout John's writings. See the opening prayer of his Discourse 3: "O Glorious Splendor sprung forth to us from the bosom of the Father, who by thy desirable beauty dost draw the desire of those who love thee away from all else unto thyself, come to the aid of thy weak servants in their time of conflict and change the impulses of desire that are in them to desire for thee, Amen." Discourse 3, Vat. 124, 284a. For a similar pattern of transformation in She'mon the Graceful, see Bettiolo, *Violenza e Grazia*, 163–164.

[10] cf. Ps. 63:1.

5. ܠܐ ܫܒܝ. ܡܐܡܪ̈ܐ ܠܐ ܟܬܒ. ܡܥܒܪ ܠܐ ܦܫܛ
ܠܐ ܡܠܦ. ܟܠܙ ܫܥܠܡ ܕܟ ܠܐ ܚܦ: ܐܡܪ
ܐܝܟ ܐܢܫ. ܟܠܫܝ ܕܚܪ ܡܥܒ ܬܟ
ܟܠ ܒܝܡ ܫܒ ܫܒܝܡ. ܟܠܟܬ ܒܚܬ ܠܐ ܟܦܫ
ܡ ܟܠܥܠ ܫܒ ܫܠ. ܐܝܟ ܫܒ ܡܐ ܕܐ
ܠܡܟ ܡܟ. ܐܠܫܝܡ ܫܒ ܕܐ ܒܟ ܡ: ܐܝܟ
ܠܐ ܟܕ ܟܠܙ. ܐ ܐܠ: ܚܐܟ ܢܪ ܟ. ܡ
ܠܐ ܟ ܢܪ ܟ. ܠܐ ܫܝ ܡܐܡܪ ܒ ܟ. ܠܐ ܫܙ
ܠܠ. ܠܐ ܫ ܡܐܡܪ ܒ ܟ. ܠܐ ܫܙ ܡܡ
ܒ ܫܐ ܟ. ܟ ܢܪ ܡ ܫܒ ܡ. ܟ ܢܪ ܡ
ܒ ܡ ܐ ܐ ܐ: ܡܐ ܠ ܡ ܟ ܡ ܒ ܡ
ܡ ܡ ✧

6. ܐ ܫ: ܐ ܠ ܡ ܟ ܫ ܡ ܡ
ܡ ܐ ܐ: ܡ ܐ ܠ ܡ ܡ ܠ ܡ.
ܟ ܡ ܠ ܐ ܡ ܡ. ✧

7. My hand cannot describe your mysteries in figures. As a self-assured sage, I apply myself to write, and at the end the images show me to be a wretch, not knowing anything! Therefore I will draw near to You and I will take delight, because I have not been able to impart your delight to others with the pen. But *who therefore will ascend your holy mountain*[11] to behold your glorious beauty, O Light, overflowing with many reflections of marvelous beauty, astonishing those who see it? It reduces to silence those who know it because its Form has no form,[12] putting those who are eager for its vision in a state of imperceptible wonder. Here are removed the understanding of the learned and the vision of the seers, by the magnitude of the understanding and the marvelousness of the true vision.
8. And because the vision is not able to expand in the light, driven back by its powerful reflections, they say that You are clouds and thick darkness,[13] and that *luminous clouds surround*[14] You and block the sight of those who love You from gazing in a disorderly way, seeking to see your hidden Nature. They also call You Sea: source of all the worlds and sustainer of all that is, enclosing and concealing all in the abyss of its greatness and offering ease to swimmers, allowing lightweights to float on its waves to cleanse their beauty. They also call You Air, inspiration of all Life, and Breath: they come and go within You without their way being hindered; while it is not as if they penetrate and pass through You like the air, but You are stretched out in them without hindrance, they move around in You, back and forth, unhindered in your expansion in them.
9. They also compare You to fire,[15] because it yields without diminishment, and it cleans but does not sully itself. And while everyone wherever he is finds it partially, for everyone it is also there entirely with the power of all its nature: one fills all one's needs from it, and if one stokes it well, the fire shows the intensity of the full effect with all its might.

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[11] cf. Ps. 24:3.

[12] Refers to the light without form (*nuhrâ dlâ dmû*). This Evagrian concept is found in John's Discourse 6, V.296a where it is identified with the Holy Trinity. See Beulay, ES, 393–95.

[13] Pseudo-Dionysius, *Theol. Mys.*, I, 3; II, 1.

[14] Ps. 97:2.

[15] cf. Pseudo-Dionysius, *Celest. Hier.*, 15:2.

7. لا شك أن الأمر كما قال، وأن الحق سبحانه وتعالى لا يُسأل عما يفعل، وهو يسأل خلقه عما يفعلون. ولكن الله تعالى أخبرنا أنه لا يرضى لعباده الكفر، وأنه يحب أن يُعبد ويُشكر، وأنه يريد بنا اليسر ولا يريد بنا العسر، وأنه يحب التوابين ويحب المتطهرين، وأنه يحب المحسنين ويحب المقسطين، وأنه يحب الصابرين ويحب المتوكلين، وأنه يحب المتقين ويحب المؤمنين المتواضعين، وأنه يحب الشاكرين ويحب المجاهدين في سبيله صفا كأنهم بنيان مرصوص، وأنه يحب التوابين ويحب المتطهرين، وأنه يحب المحسنين ويحب المقسطين، وأنه يحب الصابرين ويحب المتوكلين، وأنه يحب المتقين ويحب المؤمنين المتواضعين، وأنه يحب الشاكرين ويحب المجاهدين في سبيله صفا كأنهم بنيان مرصوص ❖

8. وقد أخبرنا الله تعالى أنه خلق الخلق ليعبدوه، وأمرهم بعبادته، وأنه لا يرضى لعباده الكفر، وأنه يحب أن يُعبد ويُشكر، وأنه يريد بنا اليسر ولا يريد بنا العسر، وأنه يحب التوابين ويحب المتطهرين، وأنه يحب المحسنين ويحب المقسطين، وأنه يحب الصابرين ويحب المتوكلين، وأنه يحب المتقين ويحب المؤمنين المتواضعين، وأنه يحب الشاكرين ويحب المجاهدين في سبيله صفا كأنهم بنيان مرصوص. وقد أخبرنا أنه لا يحب الفساد، ولا يحب المفسدين، ولا يحب الظالمين، ولا يحب الخائنين، ولا يحب المعتدين، ولا يحب المستكبرين، ولا يحب المختالين، ولا يحب الفرحين، ولا يحب المرحين، ولا يحب الكافرين، ولا يحب الظالمين، ولا يحب المفسد

10. Thus it is, O Good One, that You are in all those who love You: You are present to them in ineffable wonder, in the glory of the splendor of your Beauty, in the strength of your Nature, in the understanding of You, more sublime than all. And by all who love You, You are completely found with all that is yours; in each of them You are wholly part of him without diminishment, while no one is able to possess[16] You totally.[17] Glory to the Totality which contains all totalities while not being limited by them!
11. You are also the Father of rational beings born of your Spirit: your Spirit is described as "Birthgiver," in the feminine,[18] in that He has generated all to this world so that they might be bearers of sons to their world. But He is the Begetter, in that He is going to engender to his living world, the rational beings who will no longer generate.[19] And just as a mother nourishes her children and they grow strong from her, so those born of your Spirit suck Life at your bosom in the world without end.
12. But as children resemble their begetter, so the sons which are of your Spirit are transformed into your likeness, not by nature but by glory. And you make co-heirs of your Son[20] those who have remained in your inheritance. O Omnipotent One, Father of all who have made wise our ignorance by the wisdom of your mysteries, to You be glory forever and ever! Amen.

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[16] Here a variant from ms B and from the Arabic version is used for the verb possess, as indicated by Beulay.

[17] On the use and repetition of all (*kul*), see P. J. Botha, "The Theology of Totality: Ephrem the Syrian's Use of the Particle *kul* (all)," *Studia Patristica* 25 (1993): 223–28.

[18] cf. Gen. 3:20. Here John refers to the fact that *rûḥâ* is grammatically feminine in Syriac. Whether this affected how John thought about the role of the Spirit is not in evidence. See also Letters 49.11 and 51.4. See S. P. Brock, "The Holy Spirit as Feminine in Early Syriac Literature," *After Eve*, ed. Janet Martin Soskice (London: Collins/Marshall Pickering, 1990), 73–88. And see Susan Ashbrook Harvey, "Feminine Imagery for the Divine: the Holy Spirit, the Odes of Solomon, and Early Syriac Tradition," *SVTQ* 37 (1993): 111–139.

[19] cf. Lk. 20:35–36; Evag. Cent. I, 5; II, 50; V, 89.

[20] cf. Rom. 8:17.

10. ܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܡܪܝ ܐܢ ܐܚܝ ܡܝܬ ܘܐܢܬ ܬܗܘܝ ܚܝܐ ܠܥܠܡ. ܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܝܫܘܥ ܐܢܐ ܗܘ ܩܝܡܬܐ ܘܚܝܝܬܐ. ܡܢ ܕܡܗܝܡܢ ܒܝ ܐܦ ܐܢ ܡܝܬ ܢܚܝܐ. ܘܟܠ ܗܘ ܕܚܝ ܘܡܗܝܡܢ ܒܝ ܠܥܠܡ ܠܐ ܢܡܘܬ. ܗܠ ܗܕܐ ܡܗܝܡܢܬ ܐܢܬ ܠܗ ܡܪܝ ܐܦ ܗܟܢܐ ܐܝ ܕܐܢܐ ܗܘ ܕܐܬܐ ܠܥܠܡܐ ܕܢܐܬܐ ܘܢܕܝܢ ܠܡܝܬܝܢ ܘܠܚܝܝܢ.

11. ܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܐܝ ܡܪܝ ܐܦ ܗܟܢܐ ܐܢܐ ܗܘ ܕܡܗܝܡܢ ܒܝ ܐܦ ܐܢ ܡܝܬ ܢܚܝܐ. ܘܟܠ ܗܘ ܕܚܝ ܘܡܗܝܡܢ ܒܝ ܠܥܠܡ ܠܐ ܢܡܘܬ. ܗܠ ܗܕܐ ܡܗܝܡܢܬ ܐܢܬ ܠܗ ܡܪܝ ܐܦ ܗܟܢܐ ܐܝ ܕܐܢܐ ܗܘ ܕܐܬܐ ܠܥܠܡܐ ܕܢܐܬܐ ܘܢܕܝܢ ܠܡܝܬܝܢ ܘܠܚܝܝܢ.

12. ܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܐܝ ܡܪܝ ܐܦ ܗܟܢܐ ܐܢܐ ܗܘ ܕܡܗܝܡܢ ܒܝ ܐܦ ܐܢ ܡܝܬ ܢܚܝܐ. ܘܟܠ ܗܘ ܕܚܝ ܘܡܗܝܡܢ ܒܝ ܠܥܠܡ ܠܐ ܢܡܘܬ. ܗܠ ܗܕܐ ܡܗܝܡܢܬ ܐܢܬ ܠܗ ܡܪܝ ܐܦ ܗܟܢܐ ܐܝ ܕܐܢܐ ܗܘ ܕܐܬܐ ܠܥܠܡܐ ܕܢܐܬܐ ܘܢܕܝܢ ܠܡܝܬܝܢ ܘܠܚܝܝܢ.

13. What is this wonderful thing, that this Unique One, this Solitary One, wants to appear on his own to those who love Him, so that they greatly increase his delight! It is much preferred by Him, as I learned from Him, that those who look on his beauty keep themselves far from the vision of his image,[21] so that to the purification of the mirror of their person be joined the clarity of the vision of his face. Indeed, it is not for the minds who behold God to examine his image with desire and not feel awe at gazing on Him, freely—provided they do not gaze boldly, since it is only fitting for holy things to be seen obscurely by the saints, in concord.
14. As to the profane and the disorderly, let them depict fantasies on the curtain of the mysteries. You go in, pray in your inner room, being hidden from the view of on-lookers,[22] and you will see your hidden Father there, the reward of your prayer.[23] From whomever sees your prayer, you will receive your reward;[24] before whomever you make known your works, from him you may also seek gifts for yourself.
15. Only one thing pleases the Lord of all: that the heart be clear of every blemish. And who is able to do this in the company of many people? Because the greater the number, the more things are thrust on him: dreadful things, which strip and clothe with shame, which are pleasing yet pollute, which are beautiful yet disfigure. Blessed is the sense of hearing which is closed to all those things! And blessed the heart which is empty of their memory, because in it our sweet God reveals Himself in his glory!
16. My Lord, how can desire have the abundance of delight if You are not mingled with it in the mystery of union? I am amazed[25] at the mystery! There is no gift like this, which stills the intellect and maintains it without stirrings because its sweetness is beyond strength. Nor is there anything like it which lends itself less to patterns of speech, and there is nothing like it for putting to shame the desire of the belly.

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[21] cf. Gen.1:26–27. There seem to be various stages of light in the life of the soul: the beauty of the soul itself, the image of God, is first purified by the divine light; then the vision of the divine light appears in the mirror of the soul; finally there is a direct vision of the divine light. See also Letters 15, 28, and 40. See Discourse 6, "On the visitations bestowed on solitaries," V.292b–304a.

[22] Mt. 6:5; Pseudo-Dionysius, *Theol.Mys.*, 1:3.

[23] cf. Mt. 6:6.

[24] cf. Mt. 6:5.

[25] Amazed, from wonder (*témhâ*).

13. ملا هب لمه :ليمزلا ابا هب لمه ،ليمزلا ابا هب لمه ،ليمزلا ابا هب لمه
لجر .ةمهتملا ةفخ نم هب :ةنيدملا لخد ةمهتملا
هب :ةيقوقح تيشو :ةكرتشم ةمهلا لصا حلف هب
.ةمهتملا ةسردم ةلهتبملا .ةيمست ةمهلا ةمكحم ليلد
لتخملا نم ةمهلا لجر .ةكشلل ةمهتملا ليلد ةفرعم
ةمهلا لا :ةمهلا ليلج ةمكحم :ةلحرلا تيشو
ةلهتبملا .ةمزلا لا ةلدبم ي .ليلدلاقيقاوا ةيلا هن ةيلا هب
* ةمدقم هب ةيلا ةيقيقحلا ةمهتملا ةفرعم

14. ةيلا ةمهلا ليلد لخاد ةقا هن ةلتقم هب ةفرعم
ليلد ليلد ليلد ي .ةمهلا لا رمأ لجر .ةمهلا لا رمأ
ليلد هن لا ربخ ب .ةمهلا لا رمأ لجر .ليلدلا
ةيلا لجر .ةلحرلا لخادلا ةفرعم لصا ةمهلا لمعلا .لدتبم
هن لجر .ةلحرلا ةيلبق ةمهلا :ةلحرلا ةيلبق ةمهلا
* ةلدبم ةفرعم لجأ نم :لا لا ةمكحم ةمهلا

15. .ةمهلا لجر ةفرعم ةمهلا لجر .لجر ليلد ةمهلا
ليلدلا ليلدلا ةفرعم لجر .ةمهلا ةيلا ةمهلا لجر ليلد
ةمكحم .ليلدلا ةمكحم ةمكحم ةمكحم :ةمهلا نم
ةمهلا ةيلمعلا ةيلمعلا .نم .ةمهلا ةلدبم ةفرعم
ةيلا :ةمهلا ةمكحم نم ةلدبم ةفرعم :ةمهلا نم ةيلا
* ةلدبم ةفرعم لجأ نم ةلدبم لجر .ةلدبم ليلدلا

16. ةيلا نم :ةيلمعلا ليلدلا ةمهلا لجر ليلدلا نم ةيلا
لا ةمكحم .ليلد لا رمأ .ليلدلا ليلد لا ةمكحم
ةلهتبملا لجر .ليلد لا رمأ لصا .ليلدلا ليلد لا ةمكحم
ةلهتبملا ةمهلا :لا رمأ لصا لجأ لجر ةلدبم ليلدلا
ةمهتملا لجر ليلد لا ليلد :ليلد نم لجر ةمهتملا
* ةلهتبم ةلدبم في ةفرعم لا .ةلهتبم ةمكحم

17. Why are you afflicted in your heart when you hear the words of these adversaries? Have you ever seen anyone made ugly or polluted by insult and abuse? Or who is there who is made beautiful and exalted by elegant phrases or words of praise? Who is able to give me joy as great as this: to be proclaimed to the world as impure and contemptible by false witnesses? As my Lord lives, I do not murmur against them to anyone; nor do I complain before him, but I pray for them as for my friends; I love them as those who bind my wounds, and from the joy of my heart I cry out:
18. "How I would wish, if it were possible, that even all the mute creatures would recite my reproaches and I become hateful to everyone; thus my iniquities might be purified by iniquity. How I should thank the Physician of souls, that before the sores of my soul become foul and fetid, He has prepared remedies to heal it! Glory to You, O true Physician, with your healing medicines You bind up the wounds of those who are afflicted! Amen. May the mercy of your grace be on those who report my wrong doings and your cleansing dew be on the impure who find fault! Amen."

17. ܗܢ ܟܠ ܗܢ ܠܐ ܟܚܫ ܚܟܡܬ ܚܒܪ ܘܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܐܝܟ ܕܐܡܪ ܠܟ ܐܢܐ ܘܐܢ ܠܐ ܬܫܡܥ ܠܝ ܐܠܐ ܕܐܚܕ ܥܡ ܬܪܝܢ ܐܢܫܝ ܒܝܬ ܗܠܝ ܘܐܢ ܐܡܪ ܠܟ ܐܢܐ

[AGAIN CONCERNING HUMILITY[1] AND OBEDIENCE]

1. If, my brother, you are determined to proceed on the way of your Lord's humility and to take up the example of his gentleness, that with Him and through Him you might draw near to his Father,[2] that is, see the glory of his Majesty in your soul for its delight: walk according to the example which He has shown you. For at first He did not use great things, He the Great One for whom it would have been easy, but He began in a human way with lowly things and concluded divinely with exalted things. He did these things for our sake, for our instruction, to prepare our way, not for his sake. As He said: *I am the way*.[3] If then you wish to become his disciple and his friend, walk with Him according to his word that the disciple is to be like his master.[4]
2. And what is his likeness? He observed the duties of human nature, and hid those of his divinity; the Lord of the Law was Himself *subject to the Law*[5] and kept its commandments. Afterwards, He went out to the desert to fast and strove with the Accuser and subdued him.[6] Then, after his victory, He began to act divinely and showed us that whoever in a homely fashion does not carry out lowly actions to give rest to others and does not subject himself,[7] following Paul, as a servant to his masters[8] in all things despicable and scornful—but goes out first to stand in solitary combat, is not able to conquer nor acquire the purity which sees God. As the skilled, intelligent Evagrius said: "It is not possible to acquire a pure heart without perfect mastery over the demons."[9]

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[1] Humility (*makkêkûtâ*): this letter is commented on at length in Beulay ES, 105–111. Humility for John is the ground on which the spiritual edifice grows. Much of his thinking here resembles that of Abba Isaiah except that John seems to take it a step further, uniting it even closer to the mystical life by the ministry of the heart (*pulhânâ dablébbâ*). On the importance of humility in Isaac of Nineveh, see Alfeyev, *Spiritual World of Isaac*, 111–128.

[2] cf. Jn. 14:6.

[3] Jn. 14:6.

[4] cf. Matt. 10:25; Luke 6:40.

[5] Gal. 4:4.

[6] Matt. 4:1–11.

[7] cf. Lk. 2:51.

[8] cf. 1 Cor. 9:19.

[9] See Letter 27 in W. Frankenberg, *Evagrius Ponticus* (Berlin, 1912), 582.

الاستعلام عن الصحة والسلامة.

1. لا حاولنا وعدوه لنواحل هذا: سبب الزحف في العبء هذا وعدوه وعدوه لنواحل

3. Indeed, because the Rebel who opposes us fights by means of pride and wishes to conquer wrongfully by arrogance, our victorious King arms us with the weapons of humility. For without the invincible strength of humility no one conquers. Humility abases the pride of the deceitful one, and makes him be trampled under the feet of the gentle and kind. See how our Fathers, these heroes who prepared our path, put on humility which is the garment of Christ,[10] and thereby defeated Satan and bound him with the bonds of darkness.
4. The greatest and first-born of the Prophets, by his humility undid and made ineffectual all the tricks of all the demons of the Egyptians.[11] The Lord of the Prophets and the Fulfillment of prophecy, by his most sublime gentleness relieved our shoulders of the yoke of death and cut the snares of our enemy from our neck. Concerning the great Pambo whose face shone,[12] the faithful Abba Poemen said that he was strong and great in his work, but he rushed to perform every humble service.
5. Abba Theodore, who with the bonds of his prayer was binding the demons outside of his cell,[13] made himself the last of all and fled from an office of honor.[14] And the devil, when he was conquered by Abba Macarius, said concerning his defeat: "Of all the things you do, only by your submission are you able to conquer me."[15] The devil is not able to cast a person down if he does not accept pride from him, the passion by which he himself fell from heaven to the bottomless pit; by his own experience he learned about the passion which alienates from the Lord and understood that whoever accepts it, his fall is grievous.

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[10] For Isaac of Nineveh, "Humility is the garment of divinity," as found in A. J. Wensinck, *Mystic Treatises by Isaac of Nineveh* (Amsterdam, 1923), 384. See Homily 82 in Bedjan, *Mar Isaacus*, 574.

[11] cf. Ex. 7, 8.

[12] Budge, *Book of Paradise*, I, 799, n. 607.

[13] Ibid., I, 900, n. 264 [260]; here it says that Abba Theodore was fleeing the diaconate.

[14] Ibid., I, 885, n. 231 [227].

[15] Ibid., I, 743, n. 443.

3. ܗܘ ܕܡܬܡܢ ܒܫܘܠܡܐ ܕܥܡ ܐܠܗܐ ܘܒܥܐ ܠܡܫܬܘܕܥ ܒܟܠ ܡܕܡ ܕܥܒܕ ܠܗ ܐܠܗܐ ܒܫܠܡܐ ܘܒܚܕܘܬܐ ܕܠܒܐ ܘ

6. Therefore arm yourself with humility which is pride's antidote, and you will be preserved from a slippery downfall by considering yourself contemptible, to be scorned, and stupid. "Woe to the one who is wise in his own eyes," says the prophet.[16] Make of yourself a broom and a cloth for cleaning all the shameful things of your brothers, thinking as a servant towards his masters and not as a brother among his brothers. And with discernment look at the Pauline principle, lest your labor be without fruit: "All for God."[17]
7. At the time of submission, do not seek freedom, lest you be bound by the yoke of slavery at the time of freedom like so many. It is not good for an infant to have bread, nor for an adult to suck milk. More than anything, it is humbleness of heart which elevates the rational mind to look on the loftiness of God, and that a person treat himself with contempt and despise himself, knowing himself to be ignorant in word and in thought.
8. As for me, my brother, while I write these things to you, woe is me because while I am defiled by all these impurities, yet I think I am something. My brother, guard against this thought which darkens those who are enlightened, whereby to consider oneself as a living dog is reckoned a folly by the mind seeking God. As the prophet says knowing hidden things: "The humble soul is God's dwelling."[18] And one who in himself bore the trial said: "The humble one inclines his head in a lowly spirit and becomes the dwelling place of the Holy Trinity."[19] And again: "The humble one will see the star of prayer."

[16] cf. Prov. 3:7; 26:12; Rom. 12:16.
[17] cf. 1 Cor. 10:31; Col. 3:17.
[18] cf. Is. 57:15.
[19] According to Beulay, an Arabic version indicates Evagrius as the source here.

6. ⠍⠁⠽ ⠓⠑ ⠁⠇⠎⠕ ⠎⠁⠽ ⠊⠝ ⠓⠊⠎ ⠓⠑⠁⠗⠞ ⠞⠓⠁⠞ ⠓⠑ ⠍⠁⠽ ⠃⠑ ⠛⠊⠧⠑⠝ ⠞⠕ ⠓⠊⠍ ⠁⠇⠎⠕ ⠞⠓⠁⠞ ⠓⠑ ⠍⠁⠽ ⠃⠑ ⠛⠊⠧⠑⠝ ⠞⠕ ⠓⠊⠍ ⠁⠝⠙ ⠞⠓⠁⠞ ⠓⠑ ⠍⠁⠽ ⠗⠑⠍⠁⠊⠝ ⠁ ⠏⠗⠊⠑⠎⠞ ⠁⠇⠇ ⠓⠊⠎ ⠙⠁⠽⠎. ⠁⠝⠙ ⠞⠓⠑⠽ ⠎⠓⠁⠇⠇ ⠞⠁⠅⠑ ⠁⠺⠁⠽ ⠞⠓⠑ ⠗⠊⠛⠓⠞ ⠑⠽⠑ ⠁⠝⠙ ⠞⠓⠑ ⠇⠑⠋⠞ ⠑⠽⠑ ⠁⠝⠙ ⠞⠓⠑ ⠗⠊⠛⠓⠞ ⠑⠽⠑ ⠁⠝⠙ ⠞⠓⠑ ⠇⠑⠋⠞ ⠑⠽⠑ ⠁⠗⠑ ⠞⠓⠑ ⠑⠽⠑⠎ ⠕⠋ ⠞⠓⠑ ⠗⠊⠛⠓⠞⠑⠕⠥⠎ ⠁⠝⠙ ⠞⠓⠑ ⠑⠽⠑⠎ ⠕⠋ ⠞⠓⠑ ⠗⠊⠛⠓⠞⠑⠕⠥⠎ ⠁⠝⠙ ⠞⠓⠑ ⠑⠽⠑⠎ ⠕⠋ ⠞⠓⠑ ⠗⠊⠛⠓⠞⠑⠕⠥⠎ ⠁⠗⠑

9. Be the first at every despised work and the last to finish.[20] Thus your foulness will be cleansed by what is ugly, and your sins be made whiter than snow[21] by what is despised and contemptible. While you are on duty, let there be no moment void of vile work, in preference to a better ministry. Close your mouth to all words good and bad and breathe life from the mouth of others, that is, keep in your memory the words of the Spirit spoken by them, and be constant in service to give them rest. Let it be understood that of all the vile tasks to be done, the worst ones are your portion; but the honorable ones, behave as not worthy of them. In every humiliation, show your weakness to the One who knows all.[22]
10. In all the actions you do with others, whether virtuous or contemptuous, show yourself the least of all. Abhor and neglect your wisdom, that the wisdom of the Lord may dwell in you; be an adversary to your own understanding, that the knowledge of truth may make you its steward. Control the words of your tongue and do not listen to those who say foolish and stupid things. Do not have a friend, I beg you, who may seek your help at the time of your conflict. Nor have an enemy who may hate your friend.[23] Treat everyone equally in peace without secrecy. And blessed are you if you listen to me!
11. Towards the humble put on modesty, and with the contentious speak cheerfully. In the presence of the wise, be attentive and each time you are questioned, say: "I do not know." If you see someone doing a blameworthy deed, and you are asked who has done it, say: "I do not know." So also be on guard about the words which you hear.

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[20] These references to the common life indicate that this was written for one still living in a community rather than for another solitary.

[21] cf. Is. 1:18.

[22] To the One who knows all (*kul*).

[23] Not to have a close friend who might interfere in difficult times which are for solitary combat, or whose friendship might be resented by others, but rather to live the common life in detachment.

9. ܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܝܫܘܥ ܠܬܠܡܝܕܘܗܝ ܐܢ ܒܥܐ ܐܢܫ ܕܢܐܬܐ ܒܬܪܝ ܢܬܟܪ ܢܦܫܗ ܘܢܣܒܠ ܨܠܝܒܗ ܘܢܬܒܥܢܝ. ܡܛܠ ܕܡܢ ܕܒܥܐ ܢܦܫܗ ܢܐܒܕ ܠܗ ܘܡܢ ܕܐܒܕ ܢܦܫܗ ܡܛܠܝ ܐܦ ܗܘ ܢܫܟܚܢܝ ܐܬ ܢܦܫܗ ܒܗ. ܡܛܠ ܡܐ ܓܒܪܐ ܢܫܪܐ ܠܗ ܕܢܟܣܒ ܟܠ ܥܠܡܐ ܘܢܬܚܣܪ ܒܢܦܫܗ ܐܘ ܢܬܒܛܠ ܡܢ ܡܠܟܘܬܐ ܕܫܡܝܐ ܘܠܐ ܢܫܟܚ ܐܬܪ ܠܡܐ ܕܢܗܒ ܓܒܪܐ ܠܡܦܪܥ ܡܢ ܢܦܫܗ ܐܘ ܡܢ ܡܢ ܢܬܠ

12. To everyone who calls you, answer, and all which you are commanded by him do for your personal profit. Excel in every law which the Spirit has ordained, at the proper time and not when it seems right to you. Be obedient to the Lawgiver by keeping his laws, and reject the imaginary laws which your thought causes to spring up. Do not think to change the times which the one who gave you your habit has set for you, lest you declare yourself to be wiser than him.[24] Control your belly with measure, and do not insist you are right about something, as one who is ignorant. Let your way of life be revealed to God alone, and let no one clothed with flesh probe your secrets.
13. Do not place your confidence in any one, because unalloyed truth is lacking to our wicked generation. Do not do your own will, lest your ministry be rejected by God; but in everything be an enemy to your will and do all which pleases your companion. Sing praises from your heart without ceasing, and meld all your actions to the remembrance of your Creator: that is the ministry which will manifest the face of your Lord to you; and this is the reward received by the one who prays to God in secret. "Go in, pray in secret in your inner room, for there you will see your Father who is hidden:"[25] his reward, given openly, is his manifestation in the soul.
14. Let no ministry be greater in your eyes at the time of submission than approaching God, except what breaks your will in the work of giving rest to others. Free ministry at the time of freedom is profitable; but freedom is opposed to submission, as also submission to freedom. There is no profit in ministry which is done casually because it produces no fruit for the joy of the worker's heart.

[24] Progression from Novitiate to Community to Solitary life is of course dependent on the judgment of the Superior.

[25] cf. Matt. 6:6.

12. ܚܠܐ ܕܐܢ ܐܡܪ ܠܟ ܐܚܝ ܘܐܢ ܐܡܪ ܠܟ ܐܚܝ ܕܫܩܪ

15. A garden abundant in all good things to delight in, such is the soul of the one who does everything for God, to find the knowledge of him. The wise one fits his ministry to his measure, but the fool seeks what exceeds him. Knowledge[26] proceeds according to the ministry of each abode, but ignorance confuses its labor in a trackless waste; as a result of its toil it eats insipid and bitter fruits. You then, O wise one, be occupied with knowledge, as you have learned.
16. Be clothed always with the modesty pleasing to God, because it will bring death to the passions in your soul. Put on humility at all times because it makes you a dwelling for God. Deal kindly with everyone, thereby your soul will be enlightened to see hidden things. Humble yourself to learn from those who are instructed the meaning of the mysteries which are in the Scriptures, and do not rely on understanding acquired from your labor: humility is greater than toil as you learn from the one who fasted seventy weeks;[27] and understanding is not given to the proud, as the sage explains it.[28]
17. As long as you are in community, in all the communal tasks, be one who is subject and not one who commands. At all times, constantly shield your vision from harmful sights, and by your thought destroy their images from your heart. Understand what I say, and may the Lord give you the strength to get rid of the images which are in your intellect! Amen.

[26] cf. Abba Isaiah 23.7, see de Broc, *Abbé Isaïe*, 194–95.

[27] Possible reference to Daniel for whom fasting was integral to his understanding of the mysteries and to his prophetic ministry. "Seventy weeks" may refer to the prophecy indicated in Dan. 9. On the Syriac Apocalypse of Daniel and recent studies linking it to seventh-century monastic circles, see Golitzin, "Making the Inside like the Outside."

[28] Ps. 49:13, 21.

15. ܗܘ ܗܢ ܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܡܪܝ ܫܠܡ ܠܟ ܐܝܟ ܕܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܠܐ ܫܒܥ ܐܡܪ ܠܟ ܐܠܐ ܫܒܥ ܫܒܥܝܢ ܐܡܪ

18. For the more a person despises and rejects himself, thus will he be glorified by God. And according as he gives himself to the service and contentment of others with discernment, thus God will show him to many as exalted and glorified, and they will earnestly submit to his contentment and to his will. And God also listens to his every request because he obeys Him. If Joseph had not first subjected himself to slavery, he would not have become a ruler in Egypt;[29] and if the Only Begotten had not Himself assumed the role of servant among his disciples,[30] He would not have had authority over the passions and the demons. He would not have conquered his enemies and all would not have been subject to Him, as to the Lord and King, by order of the Creator of all.[31]
19. Before everything and in everything, this is what I caution you about: do not be dead to Life, that is, may your heart never be empty of the remembrance of your Lord. This is the meaning of: *Whoever lives and believes in me will not die forever.*[32] For virtue, whose ministry is not mixed with the thought of God, is like a corpse without life. There is no consolation for parents in dead children, but only a broken heart; so also without discernment there is no fruit of joy produced for the pleasure of the one who cultivates virtues and a good life, but only heartache and torment.
20. Wise is the person of discernment who shows his banner: "For God alone"![33] Fools stumble like blind men over many of the things performed by him for their healing. Better for you is the continual thought of God together with the ministry of deeds, than standing at a regular service being seen by someone. Many are they who till the land, but only the wise increase its fruit. Concerning those who were eating at a single table, a discerning elder attested that many of them were like swine eating refuse. And concerning *those who eat the Body of Our Lord and drink his Blood unworthily*, the Apostle says that this is found to be *their condemnation.*[34] On this account, despise and reject your wisdom, and honor Christ the universal Wisdom. With discernment and submission bear his yoke at all times; then you will be blessed, for the fruits of your ministry are being placed in his treasury.

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[29] cf. Gen. 39–41.
[30] cf. Lk. 22:26; Jn. 13:4.
[31] cf. 1 Cor. 15:24–28; Creator of all (*kul*).
[32] Jn. 11:26.
[33] cf. 1 Cor. 10:31.
[34] 1 Cor. 11:27–29.

18. حمحا ىسح لمحا ىف لصا :للهضم هنح هوه هنا هلغو ىسح لمحا
لبتنا لسنه للهمهلح هعبر حمنو لعضه .حسلهنه
حهوهنا: لمنلهه للتسهح لسهضهه لمذ لمحا ىف لصا.
هعف لمحا هاه .ىهحسلهه للهلهسهح هنسحنه هسنضه
هههه نحمه لا هحا .هنه هعلهنا ىه هلضخ للحا هنه
نهه مهمنلهه لا ناه .ىهزه للا هذه لمحا لمحا: لا لمحا
لا :هىهضحلهح لهتجو للهضف لهسه هعهعهه للحف
نحسلهعهه :ههحهتحضححح لهجه .لهلقه نهتا للا هلضلهعه
هنه لا لمحا لهحضح ىمهحه لمضحه لهذهح سه لا للا ❖

19. مه ىتنا ىف للهبو .هنه هلهنه هتهها: ىهىهضحهه ىهضحه مه
لا لهجا. لهجا لا هذه ىهها: ىه هنه .لهجا لا نهتا هههه.
.لهبه لا نضحح نه هعضهه سنه للحو هه هه لهها
لهذه سه :لهنبه لا لمحلا لنا هضسهه نهح للهزلهه
لال .هههىحهقه للهه لهتنا لهتح لهنه .لهها نلا هه
هعف للهبه لهلا للها لمحه .لهضح لهذا هحسو
لال .لهمهوه نهضا لهقا لهجهبه للهلهه نضه هههوحضح
حسو هضها لهضح لهمهوه ❖

20. نحسه للهقه .لهنه لمحلا هحسو هعبه ح .لهمهوه لهذ ىسح
حهه لهتح لهبح: تهلهها هههلهلا هنهو للسهقه
لهلهه .ىهضحه لهتهح لهنه لمحلا لهبه لنا هذ نه .لهتهههو لهضحه:
ىف هاسهه .لهنلهه هالل للهلهسهح لهضلهح لهههه ىف
نلا .لهقه هحسو لهعقه هنهو لهلا هذ .لهذهلهه نضه
هههه للهتهو .لهبه لهضا هحا هحهو لهلهه ىه نضه
نهو هنهه نضه نلا هاه .ههنلهضها لهلا لهبهبه
.نضلهعهه هههنحسضح .لهسضه لهذ لهبهه لا هنه هتلهه
.نلا لهعقه لهسهعهه نهنه :هلهعقه للهاه هعه لهحضلهه
هلهو هنحهلهه: هنضح حهنه ضح لهضهه لهمهوه
هحسضه هههنلهلهه هاىه لهضه هحسضه ❖

21. There is no other evil which makes the intellect demonic and blind to the holy light, like one who reproaches his brother in his heart in any way whatever. This is the evil begetting total blindness in those who have it, as also love is the light uniting the one who possesses it to God the Light.[35] Who is blind and wanders in the desert? Anyone who hates and detracts his brother. For whoever loves God loves also his image,[36] and the enemy of his image is also truly his adversary. Whoever wishes to see God, let him love his image, that the true Prototype may be shown to him mystically in his soul.
22. Blessed is the one who always thinks of God, for also God reminds him always of those things whose remembrance does not come to his mind![37] Such a person is a true friend to whom God entrusts his mysteries as heir of his treasures. Thinking about God makes one godlike, as also thinking about bad things makes a Satan of the one who perseveres in it. The beauty of the soul is God; if then you wish to see him in your soul[38] for your great rejoicing, leave everything and without a thought establish in your soul concern for Him alone. You will be blessed then, because your sight will always be resplendent in the vision of Him!

[35] 1 Jn. 1:5.

[36] cf. Gen. 1:26–27.

[37] cf. 1 Cor. 2:9.

[38] To see his Glory, that is, not his Nature. On God's beauty (*šuprâ*) within the soul, see for example Letters 7.2 and 15.6. See also Sabino Chialà, *Giovanni di Dalyatha, Mostrami la tua belezza* (Magnano, Italy: Edizioni Qiqajon, 1996). On the relation of God's beauty to his glory (*šûbhâ*), see Beulay, ES, 466–69.

21. ولا بد أن يتعلم الإنسان أن الخضوع لا يتعارض مع الحرية الحقيقية، بل هو شرط لها. فالحرية ليست في أن يفعل الإنسان ما يشاء، بل في أن يكون قادرًا على أن يختار الخير. وهذا لا يتحقق إلا بالتواضع، الذي يجعل الإنسان يرى نفسه على حقيقتها، ويرى الله على حقيقته. وعندما يرى الإنسان نفسه ضعيفًا، يلجأ إلى الله طلبًا للقوة. وعندما يرى الله رحيمًا، يثق به ويطيعه. وهكذا يصبح الخضوع طريقًا إلى الحرية، لا نقيضًا لها.

22. وهذا ما يجب أن يتعلمه الإنسان في علاقته بالله، وفي علاقته بالناس. فالإنسان الذي يتعلم أن يخضع لله، يتعلم أن يحترم الناس، لأنه يرى فيهم خلائق الله. والإنسان الذي يتعلم أن يطيع الله، يتعلم أن يحب الناس، لأنه يرى فيهم أبناء الله. وهكذا يصبح التواضع والطاعة أساسًا للعلاقات السليمة بين البشر، وطريقًا إلى السلام الداخلي والخارجي.

PRAYER

1. O Beauty, which adorns all the Powers on High whose faces are always inflamed with the light of your glory through the intensity of the merciful radiance,[1] and to which they are joined by a supernal love: yes, my Lord, I beg You and entreat your mercy, make the light of your Holy Trinity shine in my soul, this light which with the intensity of its reflections the troops of the enemies are defeated. Then their eyes will be scorched from looking towards it, and with fear and trembling they will return to their darkened place, deprived of the radiance of eternal life.
2. My Lord, kindle in my soul the fire of your love: this fire by which all the supernal Powers are inflamed, this fire which destroys and consumes all tumult and sin. Loosen my soul from all and unite it to You in your mercy; and may nothing again be able to separate it from You forever and ever!
3. My Lord, breathe into my intellect the living breath of your Spirit, the Comforter, who is the Breath giving life to all the choirs of the angels of Light. Grant my intellect to remain always with them in the place of astonishment and wonder, in the unknowing which is higher than all doctrines and all those who are learned, and with them may it exalt your Eternal Being in delicate whispers, forever and ever! Amen.

(End of the fifty-one letters)

[1] Heb. 1:3; Christ, Splendor of the Father; see Letter 1.1.

❖ الحكم ❖

1. يجوز للإمام أن يولي القضاء بعض من يصلح له، وأن يعزل من رآه غير صالح، وأن يقضي بنفسه في الأمور العظام: كالحدود، والقصاص، والأموال المشتركة بين المسلمين وبين غيرهم، وما أشبه ذلك. ولا يجوز أن يقضي في الأمور الخاصة، كالبيوع، والإجارات، والمناكحات، وما أشبه ذلك. ولا يجوز أن يحكم بين الخصوم إلا بالبينة العادلة، أو باليمين، أو بالنكول، أو بالإقرار.

2. ولا يجوز أن يحكم بين الخصوم إلا في مجلس الحكم، ويكون الخصوم بين يديه، ويسوي بينهم في لحظه، وإشارته، ومجلسه، ولا يجوز أن يحكم وهو غضبان، ولا جائع، ولا ناعس، ولا مدافع أحد الأخبثين، ولا وهو مشغول القلب بما يدهش عن استيفاء الرأي، واستكمال الفكر في الأمور المشكلة.

3. ولا يجوز أن يحكم بعلمه في أحد طرفي الخصومة: كالجرح والتعديل، والإقرار عنده في مجلس الحكم، وما أشبه ذلك. ويجوز أن يحكم بعلمه في عدالة الشهود، وفي جرحهم، وفي الإعسار، وما أشبه ذلك.

❖ انتهى كتاب الأحكام ❖

APPENDIX

LETTER 41[1]

1. Receive grace and pray for me. With the gentle one[2] go up to the top of the mountain[3] and look with desire on the Sea of Life which separates into little springs to give drink to the reapers whom the Lord of the harvest has reaped for his harvest.[4] Glorify God and give praise, lest the streams return to discharge their usual Gihon.[5] Blessed is that one when the Sea with its strong currents pleases him; but woe to the ungrateful one who borrows continually, but does not remember to make restitution.[6]
2. Blessed is the one who loves to repay what he owes and also what is owed by wrongdoers of his kind. Because of this, even the borrowings of the unjust will be repaid by him, since he even repays their debts as soon as he is no longer indebted. Who can praise him except the One who is able to give all to whoever does not have enough for himself? Because of this the diligent one who gathers an abundant harvest fills his granary, but also sustains the needy at the time of affliction. His granaries will always be filled with all good things and his inner chambers will be filled with treasures. And those who eat his bread will be filled with rich food.[7] Joy will not fail those who drink from his cup and they will enjoy the harvest of his fruits for all eternity.

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[1] This Letter, while similar to John's style, only appears in two of the manuscripts. For this reason it has been placed in the Appendix.

[2] "Gentle one," according to Beulay, probably refers to Moses as his gentleness is mentioned in ascetical literature. And Moses was often taken as a model of the spiritual life; see Gregory of Nyssa's *Life of Moses*.

[3] cf. Ex. 19:20.

[4] cf. Matt. 9:38; Lk. 10:2.

[5] cf. Gen. 2:13. See also Evag. Cent. I, 83 including reference to Jer. 2:18 identifying the Gihon as the Nile.

[6] Make restitution by glorifying God, as noted by Beulay.

[7] cf. Ps. 63:5; 147:14.

مدا

[مدا] وإنحوه ومنا.

1. هجه لمحمال هجه لمعمخ محمه. حكم هكزه الحمل هجه حزمه لمعمخ محمه. ومنا وسنا. ومنه مختحما احوزا لمؤل. ومنه الحمل الحمل الحمل

3. Be amazed, my brother, that these things are spoken by one who is mute. But do not be astonished! Because the One who put his fingers in the ears of the dumb man and touched his tongue[8] has effected this. If you say: "This letter is demoniacal!," know that it is not so, even if it is written down by a demoniac—the One who casts out demons composed it.

[8] cf. Mk. 7:32–33.

3. ﻫﺬﻩ ﺍﻟﺤﻜﻤﺔ ﺍﻟﺤﺴﻨﺔ ﻭﺍﻟﻤﻮﻋﻈﺔ ﺍﻟﺤﺴﻨﺔ. ﻟﻢ ﻳﺰﻝ ﺍﻟﻠﻪ ﺳﺒﺤﺎﻧﻪ ﻳﺨﺘﺎﺭ ﻟﻨﺒﻴﻪ ﻭﺭﺳﻮﻟﻪ ﻣﻦ ﻛﻞ ﻗﺒﻴﻠﺔ ﻣﻦ ﻫﻮ ﺃﺷﺮﻓﻬﻢ ﻧﺴﺒﺎ ﻭﺃﻛﺮﻣﻬﻢ ﺣﺴﺒﺎ ﻭﺃﻓﻀﻠﻬﻢ ﻣﻨﺰﻟﺔ ﻭﺃﻋﻈﻤﻬﻢ ﻗﺪﺭﺍ ﻭﺃﺭﺟﺤﻬﻢ ﻋﻘﻼ ﻭﺃﻛﻤﻠﻬﻢ ﻓﻬﻤﺎ ﻭﺃﺻﺪﻗﻬﻢ ﻟﺴﺎﻧﺎ ﻭﺃﻭﺳﻌﻬﻢ ﻋﻠﻤﺎ ﻭﺃﺣﺴﻨﻬﻢ ﺧﻠﻘﺎ ﻭﺃﺷﺪﻫﻢ ﺑﺄﺱ ﻭﺃﻗﻮﺍﻫﻢ ﻋﻠﻰ ﺍﻟﻌﻤﻞ ﺍﻟﺼﺎﻟﺢ ﻭﺃﺣﺴﻨﻬﻢ ﻋﻠﻰ ﺍﻟﻌﻤﻞ ﺍﻟﺼﺎﻟﺢ ❖

LETTER 48[1]

[Letter of a solitary: To one of the diligent brothers on the various operations of grace which occur to those who labor.
Reader recollect your mind!]

1. I read the mystery which was hidden in your letter, O diligent laborer, and my soul was covered with joy and unspeakable rejoicing.
2. Beloved, you wrote me: "I see the sun when it sometimes ascends to its zenith; but all the firmament is full of stars and their light hides the light of the sun, so that it is not visible. Then I see the sun without the stars because its light hides the beautiful light of the stars and they are not seen. Sometimes I see the light of the stars without seeing the light of the sun and sometimes I see the moon's sphere while it also is utterly full of stars. And other times I see it stripped of stars and it stands alone."[2]
3. You are in doubt concerning all of this and whether you might be seeing something not authentic, as I learned from reading your letter. So you have asked me to write of the mysteries of these operations in a letter and send it to you. O beloved brother, having truly seen your humility I obey your love, and I write about these operations to inform you concerning these mysteries, from my own experience and from the report of reliable people who are trustworthy.

[1] According to Beulay, the doctrine in this Letter and in the following one indicate Joseph Hazzaya to be the author; see Beulay, *Collection des Lettres*, 295–296. Many of the theological aspects in Letters 48 and 49 are found typically in the writings of Joseph Hazzaya, but are absent from John of Dalyatha's work. Moreover the didactic style of these Letters is very different from the lyrical quality of John's writing.

[2] cf. Evag., Cent. II, 90.

لتنا مه بس لاحة. لبسس هكة الزيل: لتقلة حصتزلة
لاح وهقة الاصلى الاوتحصة حكسوه لحا: لزيمة
فحلتا. فزوه هوبح لموزه. لتتحة.

1. زازة وجها الاوة لمزه ولزيحلح لاوه لهجة لزيمة: لسحة فاحة ةا
   ٭ الاتفلة لا لزةزه الاوبه سهة لحتبولزه
2. جلة حة حلة هة لهمهح لنا لرنة وحوبه زيح حة حلة هحة ه

4. In a pure heart, and in an intellect which have arrived at the place[3] of Limpidity, the operations of grace are many and varied. Because of this, all the operations which you first narrated correspond to the three states when the mind is found in knowledge: one is that of purity without passibility of soul; another is the limpidity of the mind; as to the third, its operation is higher than Purity and Limpidity.[4]
5. Concerning what you said, that you see the sun rising sometimes to its zenith and that it is full of stars whose lights are more intense than the light of the sun: this operation is higher than Purity or Limpidity because it is the vision of the light of the Holy Trinity. As to the stars which are visible to you in that place whose intensity is greater than the light of the sun: these are the insights of the New World which because of their subtlety are not able to be put in words. They receive light only from the sun, and the sun from their light is visible to the intellect. But at that moment, its disk which is the vision of our Savior is not visible, because the intellect is astonished by the light of the vision of the stars, these stars being the cause of the sun's vision in the firmament of the heart at this time.
6. You said that you see the sun without stars, because the beauty of its light surpasses the stars which are not visible at that moment. This operation is more excellent than the former one, since here it is the sphere of the Sun of Righteousness which is visible to the intellect; it stands in amazement so that no insight stirs in it, neither concerning the Economy of Our Lord, nor concerning the mystery of the New World. But it is the light of the glory of Our Lord which is visible to the intellect.
7. These are the two operations of the place which is above nature.

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[3] In this Letter, Joseph refers to the three places (*atrâwâtê*): Purity (*dakyûtâ*); Limpidity (*šapyûtâ*); Perfection (*gmîrûtâ*), not spiritual perfection, but more like a fullness (*šumlâyâ*) of the mystical life. These places are connected to the three levels (*taksê*) inherited from John the Solitary; see Letter 20.4. The level of the body leads to Purity; the level of the soul to Limpidity; the level of the spirit to Perfection. See Robert Beulay, "Joseph Hazzaya," *DSpir* 8 (1974): 1341–1349. See also P. Harb, "Doctrine Spirituel," 225–60.

[4] Limpidity (*šapyûtâ*), see Letter 4.5. As in many other instances, the use of *šapyûtâ* by Joseph Hazzaya becomes more precise, even technical, than the use made of it by John of Dalyatha: a difference of style not of substance.

4. حكم لتحيى: العفو والإلا بالخلاق لوصه: لما وحكم العزيز المحترم صلاح الله. لحكتموه المحلق العزيز المحترم الحبيب لحبه وعلموه لكل لعلم: معه لملق إنسان. لعلق العلموا إلا العوق عليا في لبد. حملها العفو من لحكم: لكل في هذا. لحبه العفو لعوق ❖ علعزيز عليا العفو

5. لحكم والإلا حرم علم له لعلمه لنا لبنى لنعلق في هذا: لوه: لعلمه وعوه من حمعوه بخبر لحقه للبه علق والإلا هذا: العفو العوق من لحكم هذا العزيز كم حبلعه في لحقه. لعبه العلمك والوه إنس على لطقه: لعلمه وعوه من لحا حملوبخبر: والإلا علم لحمنه حلا إلا حملبلم لحكم وعلم. لبد لحكم لعزيز والوه لنبى لعزيز لوه لحكمه. لحكم والإلا حرم علم له لعلمه لنا لبنى لنعلق في هذا: لوه: لبد علم حبلعه إلا حقحكم وعوه لنعلم لحكم العزيز لوه لحكم. لعلم في هذا إلا علم في هذا لعزيز لوه لحكم. لعلم والإلا حرم علم له لعلمه لنا لبنى لنعلق في هذا: لوه: لبد لوه حبلعه لا حقحكم وعوه لنعلم لحكم الع

On the second operation of grace in the intellect

8. The stars then, O my brother, which you said you see without the light of the sun: this is the place of Purity which is called "impassibility[5] of the soul." The stars are the insights of the natures of creatures.[6] Their manifestation within the intellect is caused by the reading of the Scriptures, the teaching of others and the Guardian Angel. Briefly, these stars are the operation of natural seeds[7] which our fathers called the second natural contemplation.[8] In this place, the disk of the sun is not visible, but only its light.

On the third operation of grace in the intellect

9. Concerning the moon, you said that its disk is sometimes visible while full of stars: this is incorporeal contemplation[9] which appears in the place of Limpidity. As for the stars with which it is filled, this is an operation of the soul's second sense which receives insights of understanding from the stars. At this moment, there is an operation of the first sense and of the second, because the first is a vision of the light of the sphere, but the stars are an operation of the second sense.
10. And at another time, when you see the sphere of the moon stripped of stars: this is contemplation visible to the intellect without insights, that is, without an operation of the second sense, but only of the first. Indeed, the operation in which the sphere of the moon is filled with stars is much higher than that one in which it is stripped of stars.

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[5] Impassibility (*lâ hâšôšûtâ*/*apatheia*), the concept originates in Evagrius and is found mostly in Joseph Hazzaya, Isaac of Nineveh, Shemʿon the Graceful, and Dadisho. In John the term occurs only once, see note # 9 in Letter 37. Joseph often uses it in the context of purity (*dakyûtâ*) and limpidity (*šapyûtâ*), terminology received from John the Solitary. See Beulay, LM, 21–23.

[6] Evag., Cent. 3:21; Cent. 1:27; Cent. 1:70.

[7] Evag., Cent. 1:40.

[8] Evag., Cent. 3:84.

[9] Evag., Cent. 1:27; Cent. 3:52.

الرحمة العظمى والفوز العظيم الله.

8. فقال: يا أبي إني أريد أن أعرف: ما هي الحياة الأبدية؟ فأجاب: هو أن يعرفوا الآب الحقيقي الوحيد وحده، ويعرفوا المسيح يسوع الذي أرسله. فقال: أنا هو الطريق والحق والحياة. ليس أحد يأتي إلى الآب إلا بي. فإن كنتم قد عرفتموني فستعرفون أبي أيضاً. ومن الآن فصاعداً تعرفونه وقد رأيتموه. فقال له فيلبس: يا سيد أرنا الآب وحسبنا. قال له يسوع: أنا معكم زماناً طويلاً ولم تعرفني يا فيلبس. الذي رآني فقد رأى الآب. فكيف تقول أنت: أرنا الآب؟ ألست تؤمن أني أنا في الآب والآب فيّ؟ الكلام الذي أكلمكم به لست أتكلم به من نفسي، لكن الآب الحال فيّ هو يعمل الأعمال. صدقوني أني أنا في الآب والآب فيّ، وإلا فصدقوني لسبب الأعمال نفسها.

الرحمة العظمى لكل الله.

9. الحق الحق أقول لكم: من يؤمن بي فالأعمال التي أعملها هو أيضاً يعملها، ويعمل أعظم منها، لأني ذاهب إلى أبي. وكل ما تطلبونه باسمي أفعله، لكي يتمجد الآب بالابن. إن طلبتم شيئاً باسمي فأنا أفعله. إن كنتم تحبونني فاحفظوا وصاياي. وأنا أطلب من الآب فيعطيكم معزياً آخر ليمكث معكم إلى الأبد، روح الحق الذي لا يستطيع العالم أن يقبله لأنه لا يراه ولا يعرفه، وأما أنتم فتعرفونه لأنه ماكث معكم ويكون فيكم.

10. لا أترككم يتامى، إني آتٍ إليكم بعد قليل. وأما العالم فلا يراني بعد ذلك، وأما أنتم فترونني لأني حي وأنتم ستحيون. في ذلك اليوم تعلمون أني أنا في أبي وأنتم فيّ وأنا فيكم. من عنده وصاياي ويحفظها هو الذي يحبني، والذي يحبني يحبه أبي، وأنا أحبه وأظهر له ذاتي.

11. Moreover, in that first place, the intellect appears clothed in the light without form.[10] While in the second, the vision of the soul becomes one of fire. In this third place, the intellect at the moment of prayer appears covered with crystalline light which our Fathers call "the place of Limpidity."
12. Furthermore, O beloved of my soul, at the time of prayer the soul appears like a sapphire[11] or tinted the color of heaven, and this vision is of the natural place. Sometimes the integrity of the intellect appears mixed with light and fire. And this vision is of the place of Limpidity. Again, the integrity of the intellect at the time of prayer appears similar to the light of the sun, and this vision is of that place which is above nature. This is what holy Evagrius says: "The intellect at times changes from insight to insight, and from contemplation to contemplation, and again, from the vision of contemplation it rises to the vision of the light without form."[12]
13. When all of these gifts pass through your mind, know that you are standing in the place of Limpidity, that place which our Fathers call "Promised Land." The first appearance is the vision of the contemplation of corporeal realities which is joined to the vision of Purity; that which is mixed with light and fire is the vision of the place of Limpidity, this is the vision of incorporeal contemplation; as to the solar vision, it is the vision of the light of the Trinity.

[10] Light without form (*nuhrâ dlâ dmû*), see Letter 51.7.

[11] Sapphire, see Letter 17.2.

[12] cf. Frankenberg, *Evagrius Ponticus*, Pseudo-supplement # 23, 444. See also "Chapters on Prayer" # 68 in Bamberger, *Evagrius*, 66.

11. ولا زهرة حبحب في. لونه ابيض لمعم زلال حلو وجه. حجم عليز لونه الشهد: لسان في وهب ابيض معجمهم زهرة: لمحل في حبقرة هو حمضهم وهو. الحر حين لونه حبقرة ❖ الصفع زلا
12. لعد لسلم الحر لبحر. سعد تحت آه في حل :لهز لونه. لسعم لعمز لوجه ها للصفح لضع في لونه. حلوا لسلم حرف. سعلا لنس زلا في الصفع وه زلا لهز لونه. زهرة زهرة لجمع لسلم لضع في الحر حين لونه حلوا لسلم لنس هو لحبر وه زلا لهز لونه. لعمز هزهرة لهز هو حلو. الزهالح الزهال همه :للصفح للهمه زهرة: لخلم وجه ولا زهرة الزجر :الزهال
13. هو في :حبحمه حزجر لصفة همهح حبهز في لها لحزا حبقرة هو حمضهم وه. لنا فلم الصفع زلالح لهز سعلا لضع لهز. لصحمه الزهال الزجر سعلا لضع لهز لصحمه: لعمق الزهال الزجر سعلا لضع لهز زهرة لجمع في سه. الصفع لهز لضع زهرة لصفا سه الزجر هلا سه :الصفع زلا لهز هلا زهرة الزجر هلا :الصمعم الزجر في سه .همج ولا الزهال ❖ الضع الصلحا زهرة

14. See then, my beloved, as far as it could be revealed, we have revealed the mystery of these operations before you. There are various operations of grace which occur in the soul and are not able to be set down in writing: only the person who is purified from passions receives them in fact in his soul. O our precious beloved, obtain for yourself humility and love,[13] fasting, prayer, and night vigils, with faith and endurance in afflictions. And pray to Our Lord that He make you a haven of love and an abode for the gifts of his operations. Pray also for us with love, that Our Lord complete our struggle according to his will. Amen.

[13] Beginning with an ascetical approach to humility and charity, one may arrive with grace at universal love and perfect humility. See Beulay, ES*,* 369–79. In Discourse 5, John opens with this prayer: "O Good One who has never been angry, who by thy kindness bears with all our faults in tranquility without vexation, fill our heart with thy tranquility and love without distinction and the Evil One will be unable to disturb it." See Discourse 5, "On anger, distraction, distress and pride." V. 291a.

14. ولا يمكن أن يوجد الإيمان بدون معرفة الله، ولا يمكن أن يوجد الله بدون الإيمان. وهذا يعني أن الله لا يمكن أن يوجد بدون أن يوجد

LETTER 49[1]

[Another letter to one of his friends,
on the same operations[2] of grace.
Reader, understand, marvel and give praise to Jesus our God!]

1. Blessed be God, the Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ, who has revealed the mystery of his love in our heart and has made the insight of his grace to shine in our mind.
2. I heard about you, O man of God, from dear brothers who came to us, that you have great love for us in Our Lord. And from reading your letter I have perceived that this is so. Because of the fine testimony about you, I wanted to meld my love with yours and to write to you these things which you asked of our deficiency.
3. My lord, know that certain of the visions which you had are genuine, but others are an appearance full of deceit from the sham of error. Because you dwell far away and it is not easy for you to come to us, I wanted to tell you by letter of the vision of these operations.
4. As to what you said: "Sometimes I stand and watch my soul and no thought has stirred in it; neither right ones, nor accusing ones.[3] But the intellect is immersed within the soul without any operation, nor even a lisping of praise. Only quiet reigns over all the stirrings of the body and of the soul, such that neither reading nor chanting a psalm gives pleasure. And the intellect only receives nourishment from within, whereby also the body is nourished."

[1] Authorship, Joseph Hazzaya: see Letter 48, note 1.
[2] Operations (*ma,bdânûtê*), see Beulay, ES, 146–149; 191–194.
[3] Accusing ones, possibly refers to Satan the accuser (Rev. 12:10).

هلا

.ههههتسلاه مه هاا لاح لاسا لاسل :هقلا حتحتاا
لوسا :لاحسل مه لاهتحمه ههسحح ح ههسحح
.هلل هههسح اووه ووله لاحلهها

1. ااا لاح :لسههه هههه سه هههاح اهلل هه هيح
   ٭ حهههح هلاحسلح لاههه سهاه :حسحح هحهس
2. هههه هلاا لحس لتا مه :اهلل اسح ال هسحح لححهه
   :ههس هلاا لحس لتا مه :اهلل اسح ال هسحح لححهه
   هاسلاا هسهه مهه .سه لاح لاا لها لحهس ههها
   لاسههه لاههههه لهلهه .هه لحها اووه لحههلهاا
   هح حههلهاه :حهحس حهس هلهسلاا لحسح :حسحح
   ٭ لهسيح مه لحلهح حسلا
3. .هلا اسه :هلاح هههه اهسه هههه :هسه ال هها لههه
   سح لهلهه .ههحهلح لاالا لله لله هه لهههها هههههه
   هح لههها لا ههسا لالههه :لاح مه حهلا هههه.
   ٭ لاهتححه ححهه اهسح هح هههههحهها لاسلحا لحسح
4. لله :هههها لا هاسه حا حاح لا هلهه :لسهاا هه هه
   سهحح لههه لاا :لالحههحح لله لاهاح لا لحههس هه لهه
   لههحهه للهاه :لاهتححه هه لحح ح هسه هها
   هههح لاح لسا هههح حهههه ل لاا :حلحلحه
   هه هه اهههاسه لاه لسهه لاا لسا :لهههه اسها اتها
   هسه :هها مه لاسهه لهههه هههح لههه. هسلههه
   .لسها اا لهاهلاه

5. As long as the intellect remains in this place, O my brother, this state is much better than all the different actions[4] which occur in the soul. And those who are wise say that in this state, food is given in a hidden way to the intellect by the Holy Spirit, and also the body is nourished by it and does not require its usual food. Thus the immersion of the intellect in this state is the same as that of blessed Moses on the top of Mt. Sinai. As long as you are in this state, do not desire reading or the office of the psalms, but only keep your intellect in purity—that is, do not leave this stillness in any way at all; and if possible, on the days that you remain in this condition, do not meet with anyone, nor even listen to the sound of a bird, if possible. But enter your inner cell, shut all the doors, and be certain about what comes to pass in you.
6. But when this state passes from you, the state of the operation of insights comes after it. Here watch out for the demon of distraction! As long as insights appear in the intellect from within, keep silence and keep the rule of the previous state. But if the intellect has begun to wander after insights from outside of it, while depicting images and devising insights, let go of the previous rule and continue with psalms, reading, and prostration before the cross.[5] Stand valiantly and mightily and do not let the intellect go out the inner door of its heart, lest it lose its life from wandering thoughts.

[4] Actions (*sâʿórûtê*).

[5] On prayer before the cross, see Letter 13.2.

5. الحسنى هي التي : سئل بعض عارفي زمانه بعض الحكماء عن الله تعالى. فقال له عارف آخر: هذا سؤال من لا يعرف الله. فإن الله تعالى هو الحسنى بعينها. فلا يمكن أن يكون غيرها. وإن كان فهو ليس بالله. فقال له السائل: فما معنى الحسنى؟ فقال له العارف: هي التي لا تقبل الزيادة ولا النقصان

7. If the intellect is kept from wandering thoughts, after this state of insights comes the state of the love of psalms and of reading. Then, the flame of the psalms and reading so burns within the heart that if possible, even when one is seated to take nourishment, the intellect is occupied from within with psalms and reading. To this state is mixed the activity of vainglory. But when you recite the psalms or read, search your mind and see whether you recite for the love of God, or if other images are represented in your mind when it does its office of the psalms and its reading.
8. Then, after this state of reading and psalms comes another state, if the intellect is free from thoughts of vain glory: it is the gushing of tears[6] and continual prostrating before the cross. These tears are not forced, nor may the will coerce them, but only a fire kindling the soul from within makes the body to shed tears on the outside. This state of tears is the boundary between Purity and Limpidity, for they are above the place of Purity and beneath the place of Limpidity. However, they make the intellect enter the place of Limpidity.
9. After the operation of tears, an operation of two contemplations occurs in the intellect, that is, of Judgment and of Providence.[7] As a result of the vision of these things, a love of humanity descends upon the soul and a constant supplication for its conversion. When the intellect looks within itself, it sees all mankind in the form of the image of God in which it was created.[8] In the vision produced by this state, there is neither righteous person nor sinner, neither slave nor free, neither circumcision nor uncircumcision, neither male nor female, but Christ appears wholly in everyone.[9]

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[6] "Tears," see Letter 5.2.

[7] See Evag. Cent. 1:27 where he enumerates the five contemplations: of the Trinity; of incorporeal beings; of corporeal beings; of Judgment; of Providence. See Beulay, ES, 370.

[8] Gen. 1:26–27.

[9] cf. Col. 3:11.

7. من كان من الذين يظنون أن الطهارة الحسية من الحدث من غير الطهارة القلبية بالتوبة النصوح والإنابة إلى الله تعالى بالقلب والجوارح فهو من الذين يتوضؤون للصلاة ولا يتوضؤون للتوبة. ومن كان يظن أن مجرد الاغتسال بالماء يطهر القلب من الذنوب فهو من الذين يتطهرون بالماء ولا يتطهرون بالتوبة. ومن كان يظن أن الله جل جلاله يحب من عباده المتطهرين بالماء ولا يحب من عباده المتطهرين بالتوبة فهو من الذين لا يعلمون. والله جل جلاله يحب من عباده المتطهرين بالتوبة ويحب من عباده المتطهرين بالماء ❖

8. ومن كان من الذين يظنون أن الله جل جلاله لا يحب من عباده المتطهرين بالتوبة إلى الله تعالى ويحب من عباده المتطهرين بالماء فهو من الذين لا يعلمون. والله جل جلاله يحب من عباده المتطهرين بالتوبة إلى الله تعالى ويحب من عباده المتطهرين بالماء. ومن كان من الذين يظنون أن الله جل جلاله يحب من عباده المتطهرين بالماء ولا يحب من عباده المتطهرين بالتوبة إلى الله تعالى فهو من الذين لا يعلمون. والله جل جلاله يحب من عباده المتطهرين بالتوبة إلى الله تعالى ويحب من عباده المتطهرين بالماء. ومن كان من الذين يظنون أن الله جل جلاله يحب من عباده المتطهرين بالتوبة إلى الله تعالى ويحب من عباده المتطهرين بالماء ولا يحب من عباده المتطهرين بالماء فهو من الذين لا يعلمون. والله جل جلاله يحب من عباده المتطهرين بالتوبة إلى الله تعالى ويحب من عباده المتطهرين بالماء ❖

9. ومن كان من الذين يظنون أن الله جل جلاله يحب من عباده المتطهرين بالتوبة إلى الله تعالى ويحب من عباده المتطهرين بالماء ولا يحب من عباده المتطهرين بالتوبة إلى الله تعالى فهو من الذين لا يعلمون. والله جل جلاله يحب من عباده المتطهرين بالتوبة إلى الله تعالى ويحب من عباده المتطهرين بالماء. ومن كان من الذين يظنون أن الله جل جلاله يحب من عباده المتطهرين بالماء ولا يحب من عباده المتطهرين بالتوبة إلى الله تعالى فهو من الذين لا يعلمون. والله جل جلاله يحب من عباده المتطهرين بالتوبة إلى الله تعالى ويحب من عباده المتطهرين بالماء ❖

10. Then comes another state, that of the stirrings which arise and go up from within the heart: they are in the image of light mixed with fire. In this state, particular to the intellect, there is an operation taking place in the third and fourth sense.[10]
11. After this operation comes another state more excellent than this. It is only an activity of the second sense when it hears the sound of subtle whispers of praise—sounds which the stirrings of the soul and the body are not able to compose for the tongue. This state and this praise are of the New World. This praise is a pledge of the good things to come because this is the operation of the Spirit when the blessed Apostle said that the Spirit prays for the saints.[11] In this state the cloud of noetic stars[12] appears to you, and you hear their subtle sounds to which when they are extended, your mind is united in exalted praise.
12. After this praise, the intellect is silenced and absorbed by the light of the vision of this elevated and immaterial contemplation as a fish in the sea. For the intellect in this state is melded with that action which works in him and they become one. Indeed the light of the intellect is not separated from that sea in which it swims. In this state there is only activity of the first sense (sense of sight).

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[10] Evag. Cent. II, 35, enumeration of the five senses: sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch. John provides an ample discussion of the guarding of the senses in Discourse 9, "On guarding the senses," V. 320b–324a.

[11] cf. Rom. 8:27. Spirit (*rûḥâ*) is grammatically feminine but after the fifth century is usually treated as masculine when referring to the Holy Spirit. See Letter 51.4, 11.

[12] According to Beulay, "noetic stars" are the angels. This and the several occurrences of stars in Letter 48 are to be understood in the context of Evagrian influence on Joseph Hazzaya, the probable author of these two Letters. According to Evagrius, not only are angels noetic, but so also are the stars, having received functions similar to the angels. See Guillaumont, *"Kephalia Gnostica"*, 253–53. Evagrius was influenced in this by Origen for whom stars were considered as significant for humanity. Origen held that there is a relationship between the astral soul and the human soul. He also saw a role of the stars in instructing the soul after death. See Alan Scott, *Origen and the Life of the Stars* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991).

10. ܗܘܟܝ ܒܝ ܐܠܐ ܐܢܢ ܗܘ ܕܝ ܐܠܐ ܐܢܢ ܗܘ ܕܝ ܐܠܐ ܐܢܢ ܗܘ ܕ

13. After this state comes another in which a fire takes hold of a person from the soles of his feet to his head, so that when he looks at himself he does not see a composed body, but only the fire with which he is clothed. This is the state of which holy Evagrius spoke when he distinguishes those with spiritual knowledge from those who do not possess understanding. This is what he said: "Those who now have subtle bodies reign in the worlds in which they were made, but those whose bodies are yoked to ministry will reign in the worlds to come."[13] He calls "subtle bodies" the bodies of the saints which have arrived at this state of which I have spoken.
14. Lest anyone doubt about these things, we will bring other testimony to him so that he may be the more certain about this. The blessed Palladius said concerning Abba Arsenius that while he was standing in prayer and was in this state—as if all on fire—one of the brothers, a spiritual man, came and "from the window saw that the elder was engulfed in fire." The writer bore witness about this brother "that he was worthy of this vision"; because this brother who saw Abba Arsenius in this state[14] was himself a seer.
15. After this state, again there is another which may not be written of by letter. Only know that it actually occurs. And this is the sign: there are not two or three, nor even can the fourth be distinguished by the fifth, but one is extended and the other contracted and the nourishment of the two is one, in this state. For in these two states of which I have spoken, the operation is of the first sense and that of the fifth.

[13] Subtle bodies (*gûšmê*); bodies (*pagrê*) yoked to ministry: see Evag. Cent. I, 11. Guillaumont includes a lovely variant for *pagrê*: "yoked" to the commandments. Joseph uses *gûšmê* when he speaks of the spiritual bodies of the angels. He also uses it to denote the body after the resurrection. See Beulay, LM, 30–33. Beulay thinks that perhaps this Evagrian concept of spiritual bodies influenced John in his thinking about Christ dwelling within the soul. See also Beulay, "Lettre XV," 277, note 32. See Koltun-Fromm, "Yokes of the Holy Ones," 205–18.

[14] Budge, *Book of Paradise* II , 608–609.

13. ܡܢ ܚܠܦ ܗܘ ܓܒܪܐ ܕܠܐ ܚܙܐ ܐܢܬ ܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܠܡܪܝ ܥܒܕ ܠܟ ܗܟܢܐ ܘܐܢܐ ܐܫܬܘܩ ܠܟ ܠܡܐ ܕܐܢܐ ܐܫܬܘܩ ܠܟ ܡܢ ܟܠ ܠܒܝ ܘܢܦܫܝ ܘܡܐ ܕ

16. After this state, again comes another which is of joy, there also are tears in it. A person does not know what is the cause of this joy. He only knows that he is joyful; the reason for his joy is not granted him. Here is the operation of the third and fourth senses because these two actions of the senses are joined to each other.
17. After this state occurs another which is a speaking in spiritual tongues, and which is an operation of the second sense.
18. We have shown as much as we are able about the operation of grace so far. My friend, let us speak now about the deception of the Rebels, a deception which resembles the truth.
19. Primarily I will speak concerning the states which produce heat. The demon of fornication begins thus to produce heat in those who minister: the heat begins from the head and descends, as it were, downwards while a great weight presses heavily on the head, troubling it and burdening it with a very deep sleep. Though he is not yet able to sow the seed of his evil, the demon advises him that neither reading nor psalms are necessary during this activity of the heat. If the person obeys him, thus he increases his heat so much that it causes harm to the brain. But if he does not obey his counsel and begins with recitation of the psalms and with reading, then the demon descends from the head and kindles his fire around the heart or in the back against the heart.

16. الحسنة هي الحق: الحسنة اسم جامع لكل ما في حد ذاته حسن وجميل. أو يقال: الحسنة ما لا يعرف حسنه إلا بالعقل. مثل العلم والحكمة. والسيئة ما لا يعرف قبحه إلا بالعقل. مثل الجهل والسفه. والحسنة ما يعرف حسنه بالعقل والشرع. مثل الصلاة والصوم. والسيئة ما يعرف قبحه بالعقل والشرع. مثل الزنا والسرقة. ❖ الإنشاء

17. أحوالنا بيننا الحسنة اسم: الحسنة اسم في حد ذاته جامع لكل ما يعرف حسنه بالعقل والشرع. ❖ البقاء في الجنة

18. الحمد. الحامد اسم: المحمود في الحقيقة هو الله تعالى. لكن الحمد قد يكون لغير الله تعالى: كحمد الناس بعضهم بعضا. ❖ الزيادة والإحسان في الدنيا والآخرة

19. الإخلاص الخالصة لله لا يمازجه في الباطن شيء من الأغراض الفاسدة. مثل الرياء والسمعة في العمل. فالرياء هو أن يعمل العمل لأجل غير الله تعالى. والسمعة هو أن يعمل العمل لأجل أن يسمع الناس حسنه. والإخلاص هو أن يكون العمل خالصا لوجه الله تعالى. فلا يكون لأحد فيه حظ ولا نصيب. والإخلاص في العمل

20. This is the sign of his deception: when his heat begins, torpidity also begins in the body, and troubling thoughts from within of vain glory and perceptions of tasteless things, while much distraction of thoughts gets control of the intellect. Here in this state the demon also produces a deceptive smell. Now this is the sign of the smell: the more it smells, the more does corruption of the thoughts reign in the soul. He also produces his smell from the natures of creatures because it has a resemblance to them. But the smell of grace, this vivifying sense, has no likeness with these earthly things that are related to this sense. Here vigil and prostration before the cross are required of those who minister until this temptation passes.
21. Once again, the Enemy migrates toward the lower members and begins kindling his heat in him, together with thoughts of fornication. This rises up as far as the kidneys. The remedy for this temptation is fasting, constant vigil, and abstention from drinking water; also frequent walks while reciting psalms and reading, and by not reclining to sleep, but sitting or standing as long as one is in this temptation.
22. Then again concerning other states of forms made manifest by the demons, listen!
23. Whenever in contemplation you see the image of a fiery chariot,[15] know and take heed that this is a distraction of the Beguiler who wants to capture you by it for your perdition. O laborer, fix your gaze instead within the outer form, and you will find there another form seeming to be full of darkness. For as soon as one who is spiritual sees the image which is depicted before him, the fraud of its deception is made known.

[15] This is possibly a reference to the fiery chariot of Ezekiel 1:10 which became part of the early Merkabah tradition.

20. الاعتصام لنعمة عصمة. حتى لو صاحبكم في الأ
حقيقة العبيد. لنحيي لنعمة الاحوال :حكم
حتى لحكم العقل لطفه. حيث من نبغي صحبة
اي. لنور لحق لكمال حقيقة السيء لموفق.
هذا في ضن حسن الحسنى عصمة لحكم الاحمق
حقيقة العصبية :لخلق لحمق. عدل لاول حكم لموفق
حتى لحكم الاحمق. في لمعقل. العبد حكم لنا حفت
حكم لحكم العدل. لعبد حتى من متى هذا لعقيد
حتى لحكم الاحمق في لمعقل. العبد حتى لنا حفت
لحق. استمع لعي لحكم :لحاذق. حكم من العبد
لحمد :لمحكم لحكم لحكم ضمن الكمعقول لحق
لحق نعمة لنور ✧

21. سفه لنفس. معصية. لأنك لحق لحكيم لنفس في حتى
لحكم في لحق. العبد حقيقة عندي. مالاعتصام حتى
لحق لحكم. عندي لنعمة لحق في عتق. الكحقيقة
لحكم اي :لنعمة لحق لعبد في العبيد لحكم. لأنك
لحق لحكم في لعبد لا يعمى. لنعمة لحق مدرسة
لحق لحكم في نار لا حتى في نار لا يعمى. لحق
لحق لحكم :حقيقة لا في نار لحق لحكم ✧

22. حتى في لحق لا يعتصم لنور لحكمة لحق في لعقيد
عقيدة لحق لحكم ✧

23. لا لحكم لحق لحق لحق

24. Even if you see the form of a sphere before you, this is also an illusion of the demons. Or if you see the shape of stars or a rainbow, or the image of a throne or a chariot and fiery horses, all of these my brother are a deception of the demons.[16] In brief, everything which appears outside of you in these images is a deception of the demons. For the vision of contemplation is simple and has no set form, whether it appears within or outside. The demons indeed have no authority to enter within and show their deception. But if you sometimes see the form of a sphere or a star within you, do not be disturbed because the soul also is visible in these forms. But keep yourself from the things which are visible from the outside.
25. Take heed, my brother, and also guard against another form the demons demonstrate which is mixed with light and darkness: that is, the activity of the demon of anger. There is another form whose light is powerfully bright, and this form is of the demon of fornication. Then, there is yet another fiery one which is from the demon of pride.

[16] A rejection of the throne and chariot of the Merkabah is not intended here, but rather a caution about looking on images without discernment. The Mishnah cautions that the Merkabah should only be taught to the wise and to those able to draw profit from it (Hagigah 2.1). And Midrash Rabbah says that Ezekiel himself will come again to reveal the secrets of the chariot (Canticles Rabbah 1.4).

24. وإذا كان: يسلم الله الذي أنعمها لعبده حيث هو الصواب في هذه الحالة. إذ قال في ما تقدم لعبده أن يختار الأحسن له: اختر لنفسك وإذا: يعلم الله أني على حق وأنت على باطل. فإن المتعصب الذي يحب أن يكون مخطئاً: لقد قال الله تعالى. فإذا: يعلم الله أني على حق وأنت على باطل. لا أن يحتاج العبد أن يقول الله أعلم بمن هو على الحق منا. فإن الله تعالى يعلم ذلك ولكن يريد أن يعلم ذلك عباده. ولذلك قال: ليبلوكم أيكم أحسن عملاً. ولم يقل: أيكم أعلم. ولا يحتاج أن يعلم العبد من نفسه أنه على الحق إلا بعد أن يعلم الله أنه على الحق. ولا يعلم الله أنه على الحق إلا بعد أن يعلم العبد أنه على الحق.

25. وإذا: يعلمه الله العبد من أن حال غيره أسوأ منه. فإن العبد الصالح يعلم أن حاله حسنة: فيحمد الله على ما أنعم به عليه. ويعلم أن غيره على خلاف ذلك. فيزداد بذلك شكراً لله. وإذا: رأى العبد أن غيره أحسن منه حالاً. فإن ذلك يحمله على الاجتهاد في العمل. ويزداد بذلك شكراً لله.

26. O my brother, you can distinguish all of these things by the sign which I tell you: whenever you see one of these forms, if peace and quiet reign over your thoughts when it is revealed, know that this is the operation of grace without deceit. But if when you see these forms, your soul's contemplation begins to contract and your heart is filled with fatigue, horrid thoughts, and also distraction: know that this is from the demons, like the other images which the demons spread, imitating the images that occur by grace in the soul at the time of prayer.
27. My friend, I have set down briefly these things for you as I was required by love for you. O valiant laborer, read and understand what is set down before you. And pray for me.

26. ܗܟܝ ܒܝ ܟܬܒ ܠܗ ܥܢܕ ܡܪܬܟ ܒܝ ܟܬܒ ܠܟ ܐܓܪܬ ܡܐ: ܐܢ ܐܝ ܡܪܬܟ ܠܗ ܥܢܕ ܒܝ ܟܬܒ ܠܗ ܐܢܐ ܠܐ ܟܬܒ ܠܟ ܐܓܪܬ ܡܐ ܐܢ ܐܝ ܡܪܬܟ ܠܗ ܥܢܕ ܒܝ ܟܬܒ ܠܗ ܐܢܐ ܠܐ ܟܬܒ ܠܟ ܐܓܪܬ ܡܐ:

LIST OF SOME SYRIAC TERMS
(with a partial listing of occurrences in the text)

aggen (overshadow): 5.1; 15.6.
ʿâlmâ hadṯâ (New World): 2.6; 4.8–9; 15.2; 43.2; 48.5.
ʿarpellâ (cloud, thick darkness): 1.3; 15.2,6; 36.5; 47.6; 51.8.
atrâ (place, sphere): 1.3–5; 10.2; 11.2; 17.3; 23.1; 38.2; 39.10; 40.4; 47.6; 48.5,11.

berâ (create): 5.3–4; 11.2; 43.22.

dakyûtâ (purity): 13.2; 15.8; 19.6–7; 28.2; 40.1; 43.1; 50.3,7,18.
demûtâ, dumyâ (likeness, resemblance, form): 2.1,6; 4.5; 7.2; 29.1; 35.2; 36.3; 40.6; 43.2; 49.9 51.12.

ʿenyânâ (converse, fellowship): Introd. xvii–xviii; cf. 12.1–3.
essârâ (link): 47.8

gebal (form, fashion): 25.1.
gûšmâ (body, subtle/ ethereal): 4.8; 13.2; 38.1; 49.13.
gmîrûtâ (perfection, maturity): 36.6; 40.14.

ḥaïlê: (powers): 10.1; 13.2; 17.2; 38.1; 40.14; 50.10,12.
ḥâšôššûtâ (la) (impassibility): 48.8.
hawnâ (intellect): 2.6; 15.3; 19.6; 23.2; 29.1; 34.2; 40.3,7; 50.6.
ḥézwâ (vision): 2.6; 17.2; 36.5; 50.6.
ḥlt (mingle, join, unite): 4.5; 34.2; 51.5,13,16.
ḥṭîpûtâ (rapture): Introd. xiv; cf. 16, passim.
ḥušššâbê (thoughts): 44.2; 45.3; 49.6; 50.1; 51.3.
ḥzâtâ (vision): 15.10; 28.1; 51, passim.

îhîdâyâ (solitary or single one): 4.7; 22.2; 39.7; 40.1; 51.13.
ʿîqârâ (glory): Introd. xv.

kul (all): 51.10; Again...9,18; passim.

maʾbdânûtê (operations): 10.1; 12.4; 25.2; 29.1; 48, 49, passim.
maggnânûtâ (overshadowing): 13.2.
mahzîtâ (mirror): 7.3; 14.2; 15.1; 28.2; 45.3; 50.19; 51.13.
makkîkûtâ, mukkâkâ (humility, humiliation): 44.2; 50.16; Again..., passim.
métdarkânâ (lâ) (incomprehensible): 25, passim.

mšâmšanê (servants, ministering angels): 15.6; 20.7; 31.4.
mšuhtâ (measure, level): 20.4; 48.4.

néšyonê (temptations): 32.1–2; 33.1–2.

pagrâ (body): 4.2; 13.3; 20.4; 31.2; 34.2; 38.3; 40.7; 47.10; 49.5, 13; 51.5.
pârêsiyâ (freedom, familiariy): 5.2; 36.4, 6; 40.3; 51.4,13.

qnômâ (being, substance, hypostasis): 7.2; 15.8; 47.9; 51.2.
qyâmâ (covenant): 4.2; 18.28.

râzâ (mystery, symbol, sacrament): 1.5; 2.5–6; 4.7–9; 5.2; 12.4; 17.3; 38.2; 39.2,10; 47.5–8; Again... 16.
rîhâ'd-haye' (fragrance of life): 1.1; 45.3; 51.3.
rawwâyûtâ (inebriation): 7.1–2; 11.4; 12.2; 25.4; 36.2; 46.2; 47.5.
rémzâ (sign): 33.1; 40.11.
rûhâ (spirit): 5.2–3; 12.5; 13.2–3; 27.1; 28.2; 40.1; 45.2–3; 50.10; 51.4.

sâ'ôrûtê (actions): 49.5
salmâ (image): 15.3; 29.1; 49.9; 51.13; Again...21
sukkâlê (insights): 4.5; 39.2; 48.5,8,9; 49.6
šapyûtâ (limpidity): 2.6; 4.5; 48.11–13; 51.13.
šélyâ (stillness): 45.3; 47.5; 49.5; 51.16.
šetka (silence): 1.4–5; 10.1; 15.2; 17.3; 22.3; 25.4; 31.4; 45.3; 47.4.
skîntâ (Shekhina): Introd. xv.
šûbhâ (glory of God): 7.2; 11.1–2; 14.3; 47.8,10; 50.5,19; 51.10,12.
šuhlâpê (variations, changes, states, transformation): 4.5; 37.1; 50.2; 51.5.
šumlâyâ (completion, fulfillment, perfection): 5.2; 10.1; 12.1, 3, 8; 40.14.
šuprâ (beauty): 2.4–6; 4.6–7; 5.2; 11.3; 12.2,7; 13.3; 14.2; 28.1; 36.3; 47.4,9; 50.19; 51.7; Again...22.
šupra baruya (creative beauty):10.1.

ṭaksâ (level, order): 15.1; 26.1.
tehrâ (wonder, astonishment): 1.4–5; 2.4–5; 4.6; 12.3,8; 24.1; 29.1; 46.1; 47.9.
témhâ (wonder, stupor): 1.5; 4.5; 10.1; 12.8; 13.3; 14.2; 16.1–2; 17.3; 46.3; 47.4,6; 51.16.
têôryâ (contemplation): 15.10; 48.8–10, 12, 13; 49.9, 12.
téšbohtâ (praise): 4.1; cf. 5.3; 31.4; 40.14; 45.3.
trîšût nîšâ (integrity of purpose): 19.5.
tyâbûtâ (repentance): 43, passim.

'uhdânâ dalâhâ (remembrance of God): 15.10; 20.3; 31.2; 38.3; 50, passim; 51.2; Again...13, 19, 22.

zaw'ê (stirrings, movements): 39.7; passim.

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